A HISTORY OF THE POPES

BY

JOSEPH McCABE

Author of

"The Papacy in Politics To-day," etc.

LONDON:

WATTS & CO.,

5 & 6 JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.4

First published 1939

Printed and Published in Great Britain by C. A. Watts & Co. Limited,
5 & 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4

PREFACE

History will pass a severe verdict upon this generation of ours. At a time when science and a more humane sentiment have given the race a vision of a nobler order of life we have reverted to the brutalities of the Middle Ages, and we seem to contemplate with almost callous indifference a growing acreage of misery. In his analysis of this situation the historian of the future will reflect with particular disdain upon the moral apostasy of two of our oldest and most pretentious religions. For even in some of its foulest excesses this debasement of our public life is encouraged by the Buddhist and the Roman Catholic clergy. Some bold apologist may plead in extenuation of the guilt of the Buddhist priests and monks who have prostituted their influence in Japan that they were themselves infected by the inflammatory patriotism with which statesmen once more, as they did in an age of ignorance, prepare their people for criminal aggression. For the Roman hierarchy there is not even this pretext of an excuse.

In a cold and calculated estimate of its own interests it directs its bishops and priests in the Far East to applaud the aggressive greed and the savage methods of the Japanese. It blesses the butchery in Spain, just as, a few years ago, it blessed the rape of Abyssinia. It sanctions the annexation of Austria, with its ensuing train of crime and misery; it entreats the German

authorities to permit it to co-operate in extending the barbarities of the new warfare to Russia; it urges the United States to perpetrate them upon the people of Mexico; and it regards with complacency the growth of murderous conspiracy in France and the torture of prisoners and suspects in Poland, Austria, Italy, and South America.

I gave evidence of this in my *Papacy in Politics To-day*, but the facts are so notorious that a few Catholic writers in various countries have courageously assailed their own authorities. They are, however, entirely wrong when they attribute the evil to the peculiar temperament or the senile degeneration of Pope Pius XI. Not only were all the cardinals of the Papal Court in cordial agreement with him, but his policy was supported, if it had not been inspired, by the national head of the Church in each country in which its influence might be traced in the sweat of tortured prisoners, the blood of women and children, and the dishonour of statesmen. It is the callously conceived and vigorously pursued policy of Cardinal Segura in Spain, Cardinal Faulhaber in Germany, Cardinal Kaspar in Czecho-Slovakia, Cardinal Kakowski in Poland, Cardinal Innitzer in Austria, Cardinal Schuster in Italy, and Cardinal Silveira Cintra in Brazil.

When the Pope, whose utterances were awkwardly apt to be broadcast in England and America, was diplomatically reticent about the Abyssinian outrage, Cardinal Schuster and his bishops and clergy lit all Italy with their rejoicing at "victories." When, in his loathing of Hitler, the Pope hesitated about the annexation of Austria, Cardinal Innitzer flew from Vienna to persuade him that the Church might gain by the sacrifice of his

people. Almost the entire Catholic Press of the world applauded the policy of Pius XI, and mass-meetings of Catholic men and women, from Montreal to Melbourne, claim that the stench of mangled bodies that fills Spain and China to-day and will, they hope, fill Russia and Mexico to-morrow, is a necessary part of a holy crusade against the Church's enemies. With full throats they acclaim " the war against Bolshevism."

Those who are surprised at this alliance of the Papacy with brutality and treachery are ignorant of even the recent history of the Church. A hundred years ago, indeed throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, it followed the same policy. What is now called a campaign against Bolshevism was then called a crusade against Liberalism. It was conducted in exactly the same method: by supporting kings or statesmen who, generally corrupt and selfish in their own lives, resorted to savagery in order to defend or recover their power. Between the end of the French Revolution and the year 1860 more than three hundred thousand men, women, and children, apart from armed rebels, were murdered by their agents, and medieval torture was used in the overcrowded and pestilential jails. But Liberalism triumphed, and the Papacy seemed to be converted. When Leo XIII at length, and very tardily, became convinced that even France had definitely adopted Liberalism, the world began to receive the succession of impressive Encyclicals which, aided by Catholic influence in the Press, taught a new generation that Popes are serenely above all political and secular struggles; they are incorruptible guides on questions of public morality, the eternal guardians of justice and humanity.

Students of genuine history, not of that emasculated and deceptive stuff which is now taught in our schools and colleges, smiled. They know that the same policy has been pursued by the Popes ever since Europe was sufficiently awake, after the long night of the Dark Age, to examine their forged credentials. Three centuries earlier it had been a crusade against Protestantism, and this had culminated in the horrors of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, the persecution and massacres of the Huguenots in France, and the sordid ferocity of the Spanish Inquisition. Four centuries earlier than this, when the mind of Europe had shaken off its drowsiness, the Papal reaction to the revolt which spread everywhere had issued in the awful massacres of the Albigensians and the Cathari—later of the Lollards and the Hussites—and the establishment of the Inquisition in every land. From the twelfth century to the twentieth the history of the Papacy is red with the blood of its rebels.

Ironically enough, it was the triumph of the Liberalism which it had fought so savagely that enabled the Papacy to erase from the modern mind, in England and America, the memory of its long record of violence. Apart from the more humane temper which Liberalism inspired, the new generation knew nothing about the hideous events which had stirred England in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was persuaded that the sectarian bitterness it had inherited was a poisonous fruit of a dying theological hatred; for surely these Catholic neighbours were just ordinary folk like ourselves, and the Encyclicals of their Popes were fragrant with sentiments of justice, toleration, and charity. History would have suggested some reserve, but it was steadily losing one of its most salutary virtues, candour. It is in-

triguing to reflect that Lord Acton,[1] a liberal Catholic, was the last of our responsible historians to tell the full truth about the Popes, whom he declared, in a famous letter to Lady Blennerhassett (another liberal Catholic), to be "wholesale assassins" and "worse than the accomplices of the Old Man of the Mountains."

This new policy in the teaching of history, both in the school and in literature, was in part due to the spread of the Positivist ideal, with its deliberate selection of pleasant and suppression of unpleasant facts. The new generation was not even to hear of the horrid past, which was dead for ever; so the reactionaries prospered and prepared a final crusade against freedom and justice. But a more important cause of the perversion of historical teaching was the growing influence of the Catholic Church in America upon all culture and education. Professors of history found that their nineteenth-century predecessors had lacked the interpretative guidance which modern psychology furnishes, and on the pretext that they possess this more scientific equipment they proceeded to eliminate or to attenuate all that was evil in the story of medieval Europe. The Press was persuaded by very effective arguments that it is inadvisable even to notice books which are "offensive to Catholics"; and none are so offensive as those which give a true account of the history of the Popes.

These business methods of the American Church were copied in England, where Catholics have insidiously acquired an amazing influence upon the Press, publishers, and public libraries. Even the *Encyclopædia Britannica* suffered, in its last edition, a considerable "revision"

[1] *Selections from the Correspondence of the First Lord Acton*, 1917, Vol. I, p. 55.

in the interest of Catholics, and a few years ago most impudent attempts were made to impose Catholic-written historical lessons upon the London County Council and the Ministry of Education.

In the circumstances it would hardly be surprising if a new book on the Popes took the form of a *chronique scandaleuse*. Yet that is not the character of the present work. It is an historico-sociological study, balanced in its elements, scientific in its procedure, based throughout upon the original authorities, and it fills a broad gap in our literature. To a generation which has been inoculated with such old fables as that the Church of Rome inspired countless martyrs and raised civilization to a higher level, that the monks preserved the classics, the knights and ladies of the Middle Ages shone in the refulgence of an Age of Chivalry, and the people of Europe were deeply attached and submissive to their spiritual rulers, this book will doubtless seem to be, at the best, a collection of the ugly facts which are humanely omitted from the new history. The monstrously inaccurate historical literature which Catholic writers now get flatteringly recommended in the Press demands some such antidote, but the reader will probably prefer to have the suppressed truths given in their place and proportion in a normal historical narrative. He will then clearly understand why Popes who have for half a century posed as incorruptible moral oracles, isolated from every taint of mundane interest, have to-day in all countries allied themselves with the barbarism which debases our age and threatens our civilization.

CONTENTS

BOOK I

THE AGE OF DEVELOPMENT

(A.D. 50–450)

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE MODEST PRIMITIVE CHURCH	4
II.	THE GROWTH OF PAPAL AMBITION	18
III.	CALLISTUS HUMANIZES THE CHURCH	29
IV.	FROM PERSECUTION TO A SHOWER OF GOLD	44
V.	FIRST DEGRADATION OF THE PAPACY	59
VI.	THE POPES BEGIN TO PERSECUTE	74
VII.	AUGUSTINE SCORNS THE PAPAL CLAIMS	90

BOOK II

THE DARK AGE

(A.D. 450–1050)

I.	CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL OF ROME	112
II.	THE FINAL QUARREL WITH THE GREEKS	127
III.	THE POPE RULES THE RUINS OF EUROPE	144
IV.	CHARLEMAGNE AND THE POPES	163
V.	FORGING NEW TITLE-DEEDS	179
VI.	THE POPES PASS INTO THE IRON AGE	197
VII.	THE RULE OF THE COURTESANS	213
VIII.	THE DEBASEMENT OF EUROPE	238

BOOK III

THE AGE OF POWER

(A.D. 1050–1550)

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE WORK OF GREGORY VII	261
II.	THE MYTHICAL AGE OF CHIVALRY	283
III.	THE POPES AND THE ARTISTIC REVIVAL	300
IV.	THE INTELLECTUAL AWAKENING	314
V.	THE POPES REACT WITH MASSACRE AND INQUISITION	334
VI.	FREDERIC II AND THE PAPACY	352
VII.	TWO CENTURIES OF DEGRADATION	371
VIII.	THE INEVITABLE REFORMATION	391

BOOK IV

THE AGE OF DISINTEGRATION

(A.D. 1550–1939)

I.	THE MYTHICAL COUNTER-REFORMATION	421
II.	THE POPES AND THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR	432
III.	THE STATE OF CATHOLIC COUNTRIES	447
IV.	THE POPES AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION	462
V.	THE BLOODY REACTION IN PAPAL LANDS	475
VI.	THE CRUMBLING CHURCH AND THE RETURN TO VIOLENCE	488
	INDEX	501

BOOK I

THE AGE OF DEVELOPMENT

(A.D. 50–450)

BOOK I

THE AGE OF DEVELOPMENT

(A.D. 50–450)

THE three religions which have held the largest place in history and still claim the allegiance of one-third of the race were in their origin protests against priesthood and ritual. The economic interpretation of history, which has elsewhere proved so valuable, has little or no application to them in their first stage. Buddha gently persuaded men and women to avoid the Brahmanic temples and their stale services and to give all their thought to the cultivation of kindliness and peace. The Jesus of the Gospels uses harsher language about priests and temples and bids his followers worship God in spirit and in truth. Mohammed seeks to detach men from Jewish, Christian, and all other priests who were known in Arabia. How the moral teaching of Buddha became entangled with the primitive religions of Asia and their shamans, and how Islam within a generation spread over an opulent world of which its founder had never dreamed and took on a new character, may be read elsewhere. In this book we inquire how Roman Christianity, which still at the end of the first century had no priests, no ritual, and no temple, became the Roman Catholicism of the fifth century, with the most elaborate and the most exacting hierarchy in the whole history of religion: a hierarchy which begins to claim that it is its mission to rule the entire world and to drown in their blood any who oppose its authority. And this story we read in the even more dramatic setting of the rise to full power and the tragic fall of the greatest Empire the world had yet seen.

CHAPTER I

THE MODEST PRIMITIVE CHURCH

THE Church of the Popes was cradled, not in some marble mansion on the Pincian Hill nor in one of the crowded tenements of the Subura, but in the mean and despised foreign settlement outside the walls of Rome. A ragged fringe of buildings lined the farther bank of the Tiber, and at the northern end of this was the marshy Vatican Field, where the Pope is now enthroned uneasily upon the last acre of his spacious medieval kingdom. "Vatican wine is poison-wine," the Romans used to say. A few gardens relieved the melancholy aspect of the region, but there were more tombs than gardens; and criminals who shunned the city streets by day mingled with poor Greeks and Jews and still poorer Romans. Here were the cheap lodgings of the sailors from the smaller sea-going vessels which ventured up the river. The language one commonly heard in the streets and taverns was a degenerate Greek. The wall which rose beyond the river reminded the settlement of its isolation from the life of the million citizens of Rome.

To the poorer Greeks and Hellenized Jews of this squalid district there had come, about the middle of the first century, some report of the strange story which had begun to agitate the synagogues of the Roman Empire. It was the greatest age of shipping which the world had yet known, and through the port of Ostia on the coast, where the larger vessels docked, or up the river men came every week from Corinth or Antioch or Alexandria. Roman Jews were amazed to learn from these that it was claimed in the East that the shining Messiah of their

tradition had visited the earth, in ragged garments and preaching a simpler and humbler order, and had already departed. Greeks were mildly intrigued to hear that to the fifty ornate religions of the Mediterranean cities there was added one which had no priests or temples: a religion which scorned wealth and bade men and women, slave or free, meet on a common footing to cherish the memory of a prophet of unique power who had in some way redeemed the world.

The message was vague, for the story of the life of "the Christ," as they translated the word Messiah, had not yet been written, but in and on the fringe of every Jewish group beards wagged vigorously. Doubtless the story was discussed in the club-rooms of the "colleges" (trade unions) to which all workers of the Greek-Roman world belonged, and in which a sailor or artisan from the East would find a welcome. Little groups were formed of followers of Christ. The name puzzled Romans, who thought that it must be a corruption of the Greek name Chrestos, and the story was discussed in the city. It was accepted by slaves or officers of rich and powerful nobles like Aristobulus, and even by some among the twenty thousand servants of the imperial palace. The interest in it grew when Paul, the fiery preacher of the new faith of whom they had heard much from seamen and travellers, sent word that he proposed to visit them; and a few years later a number of them went out along the road to the coast to greet him.

The statement that he found Peter, who stubbornly insisted that the message was to the Jews already in Rome, or that he was presently joined by him, is so improbable and rests upon such poor evidence that it is surprising that any non-Catholic historian ever entertained it.[1] The pages of "evidence" which Catholic

[1] Professor Foakes-Jackson (*Peter, Prince of the Apostles*, 1927) does not reject it, though he admits that the evidence is feeble. Professor Shotwell and Dr. Loomis (*The See of Peter*, 1927) seem to accept it, but their work professes to be only a statement of evidence,

writers give need not be examined here. They prove only one fact: that in the last quarter of the *second* century the Roman clergy had a "tradition," which they passed on to other Churches, that Peter had founded their community. Tradition or fabrication? By that time, we shall see, the Roman community had lost its primitive innocence, and its clergy had begun to forge documents and "traditions" in their interest. Indeed, the most reliable Christian document of the first century plainly shows that there was no such tradition at Rome in the last decade of that century, and its later appearance is, therefore, worthless and suspicious.

This document, a letter of the Roman Christians to those of Corinth, which we will examine presently, was written about the year 96, and one has only to quote the relevant passage in full to show how decisive it is:—

> Let us set before our eyes the good Apostles. There was Peter, who by reason of unrighteous jealousy endured not one or two but many labours, and thus, having borne his testimony, went to his appointed place of glory. By reason of jealousy and strife Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bond, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached *in the East and the West*, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world and *having reached the farthest bounds of the West*: and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers [Prefects], so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance.[1]

---

and is weakened by its obvious aim to conciliate American Catholics. Professor H. Lietzmann (*Petrus und Paulus in Rom*, 1927), Professor E. Meyer (*Ursprung und Anfänge des Christenthums*, 1921), and a few other Protestant writers accept the statement.

[1] Bishop Lightfoot's translation in his edition of the Letter, 1890, Vol. II, p. 275. A few critics have questioned the authenticity of the Letter, but (1) it recognizes only two orders, bishops and deacons (not priests), in the Church; (2) it does not even name or mention its own bishop, who is just one of the anonymous group; and (3) it does not quote a line from any Gospel, though it has very numerous and lengthy passages from the Old Testament. Such a document is certainly not a forgery of the second century.

Catholic writers either ignore this passage or cut out phrases from it and piece them together in such fashion that they can represent that it completely associates Peter with Paul as having been martyred at Rome. On the contrary, it plainly implies that Peter did not, like Paul, come to the West, and it therefore gives us the true tradition or memory of the Roman community in the generation that followed Paul.

But Paul had come to Rome at a time when his scalding speech was bound to bring calamity upon the community. The reign of Nero had reached its highest note of insanity. The Christian who looked beyond the walls at the great city which he would win for Christ now saw, not only the golden roof of the marble temple of Jupiter which superbly crowned the Capitol, but, on the neighbouring hill, the palace which Nero had made a conservatory of exotic vice and crime. Nero had, in fact, constructed a princely garden in the Vatican Field, and some of his worst orgies were perpetrated almost within hearing of the Transtiberine community. Within little more than a century of this date we shall find the Bishop of Rome obsequiously visiting the most brazen of the three hundred courtesans in an imperial palace which was quite as foul as that of Nero, but in the first century the Roman community would have no compromise with vice. So, while all Rome murmured, in spite of the regiment of spies, the Christians would revile the monster on a louder note. Read one of Paul's Epistles and imagine him living a few hundred yards from gardens in which sexual perversity reached depths of which Paul had never heard even in voluptuous Corinth!

But we must pass quickly over the first century of the life of the Roman community. Not only are there no Popes for us to consider or any evidence of the character of the earlier bishops—we have, of course, no right to regard Paul as such—but it is very difficult to sift the grains of historical truths from the mounds of legend

and forgery under which later Romans buried them. We shall see that the Roman community of the second century developed a " clergy," and in time these clerics fabricated martyr-stories by the thousand and claimed converts for the early Church up to the very steps of the imperial throne. One too-zealous decorator of the modest early years claimed that the imperial lady who shared Nero's orgies, Poppæa, was a Christian; but the honour was felt to be ambiguous and the claim is now rarely mentioned.

It is only within the last half-century that the extravagance of these forgeries has been fully exposed, and recent works on the first century still at times make statements which are taken from them. Yet there is sound evidence that the Roman Christians were persecuted by Nero. Apart from the disputed passage in Tacitus (*Annales*, XIV, 44), the chief Roman authority on Nero, Suetonius, tells us, in a passage (*De Vita Cæsarum*, XVI, 2) which Drews and other critics have strangely overlooked, that under that Emperor " the Christians were subjected to torture "; and the writers of the Letter to the Corinthians recall that " a large number " of men and women " in our midst " had been put to death. Such picturesque details as that Nero made living torches of the martyrs in the Vatican garden may retire into the province of legend, but it seems clear that Paul and many of his followers perished.[1]

Four years later (A.D. 68) the disgusted Romans hounded Nero to his death, and in the happier days of

[1] The number of martyrs is usually said to have been " immense " or " enormous," whereas, we shall see, even Catholic experts concur that very few genuine Roman martyrs in 250 years are known. The point does not properly concern me in this work, but some readers may welcome a note. The phrase used in the inelegant and uncultivated Greek text of the Letter (*πολὺ πλῆθος*) appears in the later Latin translation of it as *multitudo ingens* (" an immense number "), and this false rendering seems to have been borrowed by the interpolator of Tacitus. I suggest that in the circumstances the correct translation is " a large number " : a few score, perhaps, out of a few hundred Christians.

the Flavian Emperors the Christian community resumed its domestic meetings. Legend again gives it imperial converts, and, since the Emperors Vespasian and Titus had been drawn from a provincial obscurity to the purple, some of the country-cousins who flocked to Rome may have heard and accepted the message. But writers who too lightly entertain the slender evidence of royal converts and rapid growth do not seem to understand the complexion of the primitive Roman Church. It was wholly Greek until some time in the third century and would, therefore, not attract uncultivated Latins. Its prayers were in Greek, and it had not until long afterwards—other Churches complained—sermons or exhortations in Latin. As late as the third century the one scholar it had produced wrote in Greek. Yet during the thirty years of tranquil toleration which it enjoyed after the death of Nero it doubtless made progress, as all Oriental religions made at Rome; though we must not forget that these were " licensed " religions and had temples, while Christianity sought no legal approval and had no public meeting-house until the year 222.

In the last decade of the century Rome again grew sombre, and the Christian community shrank underground. The Letter to the Corinthians says that " repeated calamities " have caused a delay in sending it, and this evidently refers to persecution by Domitian. That saturnine Emperor, his mind gloomily lit by jealousy and suspicion, " filled Rome with funerals," the historian says; and we can well believe that if some of his relatives or nobles had adopted Christianity they may have been invited to the grim banquets, in black-draped rooms, at which each guest found a miniature tombstone, inscribed with his name, beside him, while nude ink-washed boys capered between the couches. But Rome again slew its tyrant, and from the stifling gloom which had darkened the city the Romans passed into the sunniest period, after the Golden Age at Athens,

in all ancient history: a stretch of ninety years, the age of the so-called Stoic Emperors, which historians consider the brightest and most benevolent in the human chronicle until modern times.

It is at the dawn of this happy period that we get, in the Letter to the Corinthians, our first glimpse of the primitive Roman Church. We see that it is still, near the end of the first century, deeply religious, earnest and unworldly in sentiment, conscious only of brotherhood in the community and of equality with other communities. Not that there is any of the "primitive communism" or revolt against capitalism which some imagine. It is a community of men and women of all classes—even rich patrician members are claimed—who are concerned only with virtue. The letter, which was later mistitled "The Epistle of Clement," is anonymous and communal. "The Church which sojourneth in Rome to the Church of God which sojourneth in Corinth" is the simple address. They have heard that quarrels have rent the Corinthian community, as they often did, and the brothers and sisters at Rome gently, almost humbly, exhort them to be faithful to the teaching of the Old Testament.

We may accept the tradition that the bishop or "overseer" at the time was named Clement, but he is just one of the group who talk to the Corinthians as one kindly neighbour remonstrates with another. Before the end of the second century, or a little later, the Roman clergy forged a number of quite pontifical documents, *The Clementine Recognitions*, in his name and gave him an illustrious genealogy and an impressive and imperious personality. In real history he is just the name of a ghost. The earliest list of the Popes, a very meagre and modest list, belongs to the second half of the second century, when myth-making began.[1] As time went on the list

[1] The word Pope (*Papa* or Father) became a common title of bishops until the fifth century. Such it remained in the East, but

grew in picturesque detail. All the Popes, from Peter to the sixth century, in the list given in Catholic works to-day are decorated with the official halo of sanctity, and nearly all until the third century are described as martyrs. But if the patient reader cares to glance at the notice of each early Pope in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, he will see that we really know nothing whatever about the first ten Popes: of the next ten one only is a clearly defined figure in history, and he, though officially a saint and martyr, died, we shall see, in an odour not of sanctity but of knavery; and only two Popes in the whole series are known to have been martyred.

Let us for a moment enlarge upon this point, because few readers know how freely it is acknowledged that the popular Catholic version of the early history of the Popes is composed of forgeries The Roman clergy soon began to embellish their Church with stories of heroic martyrs, saintly bishops, patrician converts, and a peculiar authority over other Churches. This was done so flagrantly that Catholic scholars themselves, in spite of their lingering affection for flattering fiction, have to reject these legends by the hundred. It is enough to quote the Catholic Professor Ehrhard, who thus summarizes and endorses the critical study of the Roman martyrs by the Belgian Jesuit Father Delehaye, who is one of the leading experts and a Bollandist (or official Catholic investigator of this kind of literature):—

> He puts *all* accounts of Roman martyrs in the third class of Acts of Martyrs, which one may describe as pious romances . . . *there is no evidence whatever that these Acts are based upon earlier sources.*[1]

---

the destruction of the Western Empire by the barbarians left no bishop of importance in Europe to dispute the Roman bishop's monopoly of the title.

[1] *Die Altchristliche Literatur*, 1900, p. 556. One of the milder of Father Delehaye's works was translated into English (*The Legends of the Saints*), but the authorities seem then to have concluded that it was unwise to open such books to English Catholics.

Father Delehaye has published a special study (*L'amphithéatre Flavien et ses environs*, 1897—not translated, of course) of the familiar stories of "Martyrs of the Coliseum," and he has shown that no Christians were ever exposed to the lions or to any other fate in the Roman amphitheatre. Thus, according to the highest Catholic authorities on the subject, all the pretty stories about Laurence and his gridiron, Agnes and her miraculous hair, Cæcilia and the organ, Androcles and the lion, and so on, which are still used with great profit in Roman and Anglo-Catholic circles, which indeed still inspire our artists and on saint-days lend an unwonted fragrance to our daily newspapers, are as legendary as the story of Lancelot and Guinevere. Less courteous people call them forgeries. The time came when Europe was taught to demand relics of the martyrs and, naturally, moving stories about the men and women whose bones they bought. The Catacombs, which were the cemeteries of the early Christians, supplied the bones; the Roman clergy invented the stories.

Very far from such practices was the Church of the first century. The Letter to the Corinthians, which seems to have been sent in the year 96, when the broody and sombre Domitian was assassinated, reflects the life of a devout and democratic community which does not yet feel the feeblest urge of ambition. It is a fellowship of Greeks who shudder at the vices of the turbulent city on the fringe of which most of them live; who meet in each others' bleak rooms, with windows of oiled paper, to read the Old Testament and to hold the commemorative supper. Though they already call themselves a Church ("assembly") they have not even the poorest sort of meeting-room in which all can assemble. And for another half-century, while the great city rises to its highest peak of artistic splendour, sobriety of character, and social idealism, the Greek Christian community remains in complete obscurity. One shadow-Pope suc-

ceeds another. Whatever we may make of the persecution of Christians by Trajan, we are told by Bishop Irenæus that none were persecuted at Rome; and the legend that Irenæus himself came to Rome to meet his death is one of the forgeries. Even the article on him in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* says that he seems to have died in his bed in old age. Bishop Eusebius, who wrote a large and detailed *Ecclesiastical History* in the fourth century, hardly notices the Roman Church in his record of the first two centuries.

It remained virtuous and obscure for nearly a century after the dispatch of the Letter to the Corinthians, but meantime there were two developments which threatened, and in some degree disturbed, its tranquil piety and ascetic isolation. Under the Epicurean Emperor Hadrian (117–138) Rome became incomparably the greatest, richest, and most humanely administered city of the world, and he, his wife, and the high-minded Empress Plotina, the widow of his predecessor, sought to make it, as far as the less brilliant genius of the Roman could achieve this, a rival of ancient Athens in culture and beauty, and superior to it in social idealism. Prophets of every philosophy and religion were now included in the cosmopolitan stream that flowed from Greece and the East to Rome, and they found eager listeners. Hadrian's wife, Sabina, induced the ladies of Rome to form intellectual clubs or discussion-centres, and it may have been in one of these that the famous orator Dio Chrysostom delivered the eloquent attacks upon slavery which we still have.

The Christian community shared the long peace and prosperity. It found itself able to send money to the poorer Churches of the East and to win from them the grateful and graceful appreciations which the Catholic apologist converts, by a few deft strokes of the pen, into recognitions of the supremacy of the Roman Pope. How this and the prestige of the imperial city at last engendered the pontifical ambition we shall see in the

next chapter, but the way was prepared by a more innocent disturbance of the pristine serenity. The fame of the Roman community spread over the East, and the swift and elegant ships which then plied between Alexandria or Athens and Rome began to bring theological disputants and quaint charlatans who were eager to win Roman support for one or other creed.

For the Eastern Churches were now aflame with the first of the great theological controversies which were to filll them with hatred and violence, and cause not a little bloodshed, during the next five centuries. The Gnostic struggle, as it was called, may here shortly be described as an attempt to sever the Christian teaching sharply from that of the Jews and the Old Testament and present it to the pagans in a frame of Greek or Neo-Platonist mysticism. The struggle was conducted with amazing bitterness, and the new Christian philosophers took ship from port to port in search of disciples or in flight from the infuriated orthodox. One of the ablest of them, Valentinus, an Egyptian Greek fresh from the famous schools of Alexandria, came to Rome and seduced many with that sonorous verbiage which it is so difficult to distinguish from profound thinking. However saintly the shadow-Popes may have been, they were simple-minded men who were dazed by the iridescent spray of words, but the bishops of other Churches watched and warned them, and soon there were heretics and schismatics breaking the brotherly unity of the community.

More mischievous were the charlatans who, as Bishop Hippolytus describes in a work which he wrote a few decades later, brought magical or supernatural power to the aid of the heretics. A priest [1] of the Roman Church named Markos joined the Gnostics and helped out his teaching with Egyptian magic. The idea that either

[1] This, relating to events about the middle of the second century, is the first mention of "priests" in the Roman Church. We saw that such an order was not recognized as late as the year 96, though doubtless the bishop was then an "elder" (*presbyteros* or priest).

the Egyptians or the Babylonians had attained some profound knowledge which has been lost to the race is one of the myths that circulate in the appallingly superficial popular literature of our time, but the later Egyptians had acquired an elementary knowledge of chemistry, and adventurers brought this to Rome, as they bring their wares and wiles to London to-day. Markos would get a young woman to hold in the eyes of all an empty chalice or cup, and the water which he poured into it was turned into wine or the blood of Christ. The cup was, of course, smeared with some chemical. Another charlatan was a Syrian Christian who had learned the real truth about Christ from a pair of angels, male and female, each of whom was ninety-six miles high and had feet fourteen miles in length. There were many of these ancient tricksters.

But the sincere heretics did far more than these to disrupt and corrupt the primitive Church. About the year 140 there came to Rome one Marcion, who, when he was condemned, founded a sect that spread over Italy and defied the Popes for three centuries. Marcion, son of a bishop of Asia Minor, was a man of strict character. Brooding over the eternal problem of the power of God and the prevalence of evil, he had been attracted to the latest version of Persian religion which was then rolling over Asia Minor in the direction of Rome. It embodied the old Persian idea that there was, besides God, an almost supreme spirit of evil who had created matter and all its uglinesses, and Marcion identified this creative devil with the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

But he also had in his repertory an argument which founders of sects always find very persuasive. He had made a fortune in shipping and, when he came to Rome, he made a gift to the community of 200,000 sesterces. We reduce this to the modest-looking sum of about £1500, but money had then a far higher purchasing

power, and it would seem to poor Romans a colossal sum. As the Roman See was vacant, one wonders if Marcion did not aspire to fill it. He failed, and the new Pope, Pius—the first Latin name we find in connection with the Roman community—was warned by Eastern bishops that the man who held so respected a position in his Church was a deadly heretic and must be excommunicated. Marcion founded a sect, and it continued to flourish until, three centuries later, the feeble anathemas of the Popes were reinforced by the staves and swords of the police.

These controversies were all conducted in Greek, but, since that was the language of the Roman Church, it is futile to seek to excuse the Popes on the ground that the tongue was foreign to them. On the other hand, the discussions would interest or attract few of the Latin-speaking citizens of Rome. The Christian community was still, in the last quarter of the second century, mainly a Greek colony which was lost in the penumbra of the luminous life of the city of Marcus Aurelius. Historians now recognize that there was far more idealism in Rome at this period than older writers supposed, and the more thoughtful Romans dispassionately examined every ethical religion which was imported from the East. Men of high rank combined a profession of Mithraism or some other Eastern cult with a formal compliance with the observances of the State religion.

But we must remember that the Christian community still had no chapel, and its small assemblies would seem bleak in comparison with the artistic services, the incense, candles, statues, and richly-vested priests, of the temples of Mithra and Isis. The Church restricted its growth also by adhering to the stern traditional discipline. It expelled from its body any who, after receiving baptism, fell into sins of the flesh. It thus remained an obscure and suspected sect; and, for some reason which we do not know, even the gentle Marcus Aurelius treated it

harshly, sending a number of its priests and other members to the silver-mines of Sardinia.[1]

But a change had begun. Not only did the acrid struggle with heretics disturb the earlier serenity of faith, but the faithful were now scattered throughout the city and could not be severely isolated from the glamour and gaiety of the richly-coloured processions through the marble colonnades, the free games of the Circus, the amphitheatre, and the theatre, the superb (and almost free) baths and gymnasia, the free distribution of food, the provision of medical and other services. The first full and authentic account which we have of the life of the Christian community at Rome, depicting it as it was about the year 175, shows that it has drifted far from the devout simplicity of the days of Clement. So we here begin the long and picturesque story of the growth of a small religious body, which shrank from art, culture, wealth, and authority almost as sensitively as from vice, into the most elaborate in ritual and dogma, the wealthiest, and the most arrogant and most powerfully organized religion of all history; and we shall find this line of Popes which begins obscurely in Clement more frequently, more deeply, and for longer periods degraded than we can find in the history of any other religion.

[1] Duchesne finds at this date "the only authentic document extant on the martyrs of Rome" (I, 176). Professor Riddle (*The Martyrs*, 1931) describes this document as "relatively unadorned," while Father Delehaye, who is an expert, rejects all such documents, as we saw.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF PAPAL AMBITION

UNTIL the middle of the last century there was among the fragments of early Christian literature part of a Greek work which seemed so scholarly that it was generally attributed to the learned Origen. In the year 1842 the manuscript of the complete work was found in the dust of a monastery on Mount Athos and was published a few years later. It was titled *The Refutation of All Heresies*, and was written by a cleric of the Roman Church of the second and third centuries, Hippolytus, who was certainly a man of considerable erudition. But the pride of Catholic writers in the discovery that the Roman Church had included an accomplished scholar and writer at that early date was overcast by the further discovery that he had devoted many pages of the work to a scathing account of the condition of the Church and of the character and career of Pope Callistus, the first Pope who is a concrete figure in ecclesiastical history.

It was the more embarrassing because both Hippolytus and Callistus had up to the middle of the last century been reverently inscribed in the calendar as saints and martyrs, yet the one now described the other as an unscrupulous adventurer and corrupter of the Church, while Hippolytus himself was clearly the first Anti-Pope. A few Catholic scholars like Dr. Döllinger (before he rebelled against the Vatican) attempted in vain to discredit the narrative, but the genuine corrections are trivial. Hippolytus is recognized to have been one of the most conscientious clerics of his age and the one learned Christian in the West until the days of Jerome and

Augustine. Historians are not impressed when Catholic writers dispute the testimony of a priest of high character who was contemporary with the events he describes, and then on almost every page quote the statements of men who lived a century after the events they record and hundreds of miles away from Rome.[1]

The story opens, disdainfully, with the youth of Callistus. His father, a slave, lived in the Christian colony across the river, and Callistus himself became a slave in the household of a member of the Church named Carpophorus. The *Pontifical Chronicle* repeats this. Carpophorus found his slave shrewd, and lent him money with which he should open a bank in the Fish Market in the city, the quarter of the money-lenders. The bank failed, apparently because Callistus, to get a higher rate of interest, invested with the Jewish money-lenders, and there was dire trouble in the community. Callistus fled, but he was captured and brought back to Rome, and he received the customary domestic punishment of being put to heavy work in the flour-mill of his master's house. The members of the Church, however, believed that he could recover the money, and they persuaded Carpophorus to set him free. But he fell into the hands of the police for brawling at the local synagogue—he had clearly gone to rail at the money-lenders—and he was sent to the Siberia of Roman criminals, the mines of Sardinia.

I quote the story, much abbreviated, because the picture it offers us of the Roman community in the eighth decade of the second century is very different from that which we admired in the Letter to the Corinthians. Here we have rich slave-owning Christians, banks, money-lenders, brawls, and charges of embezzlement. But Hippolytus, leaving Callistus sweating in the silver-

[1] There is an English translation of the *Refutation* in the Ante-Nicene Library (Vol. VI). The account of Callistus and the Roman Church of his time is in Book IX, ch. VII.

mines, goes on to make, very discreetly, a more surprising statement about the Church. Marcus Aurelius died, and from his son Commodus Pope Victor got an order for the release of the Christians whom his father had sent to Sardinia. Hippolytus says:—

> Marcia, a concubine of Commodus, who was a God-loving woman and desirous of performing some good work, invited into her presence the Blessed Victor.

Since Marcia is the Scarlet Woman of this stage of Roman history, Catholic writers have always felt some discomfort at introducing her, as they must, into the history of the Popes. They usually, like the *Catholic Encyclopædia* in its article on Victor, admit her contact with the Pope and say nothing about her character. But the Roman historian who most fully describes her character for us, Dion Cassius, lived in the city at the time and is an exceptionally reliable witness. And since Victor is the first Pope to claim pontifical powers, indeed the first Pope to come even dimly before our eyes in the authentic pages of history, we must here expand the intriguing story that is so curtly dismissed by Hippolytus.

Marcus Aurelius, the one genuine Stoic in the beneficent series of what are wrongly called the Stoic Emperors, died in the year 180. His Stoic mysticism was of no higher social value than the piety of the stricter Popes. Instead of consolidating the fine constructive work which had been done by his pagan and Epicurean predecessors, he had doomed it to ruin by leaving the Empire to his utterly depraved son Commodus and his almost equally depraved daughter Lucilla. After a few years Lucilla had plotted the murder of her brother, but he had put her and her associates to death and had surrendered himself to favourites and pleasures of the basest description. Among the property, which he confiscated, of one of the nobles whom he executed there was a remarkably handsome and robust slave-concubine or woman of the harem. This was Marcia. Commodus appropriated her

and put her as favourite in his spacious harem of three hundred beautiful women and three hundred of the fairest boys whom his panders could discover in any stratum of Roman society. For ten years Marcia presided with spirit over orgies which in their wildness and obscenity surpassed those of Nero, and at the end of that time she helped to murder her imperial patron and married the chief murderer.[1]

This story of the brazen imperial Amazon—she loved above all to display her opulent figure in that costume—summoning the Pope to her presence will seem, unless I explain, as fantastic as if we read that Nero one day invited Paul to the palace to discuss religion with him; and the explanation which Hippolytus hesitatingly affords us throws further light upon the grave deterioration of the Roman community. Marcia, he says, had been brought up by an elderly eunuch named Hyacinthus, and this man was now in a high position at the court. I here choose the more charitable of two interpretations, for the word in the Greek text means both "elderly" and "priest," and many—even some Catholic—writers contend that the eunuch was actually a priest of the Roman Church. The *Catholic Encyclopædia* describes him as "a eunuch who was a priest (or old man)." We sink rapidly deeper. We now have priestly, or at least Christian, eunuchs who are in high positions at one of the most corrupt courts which are known in Roman history, and are amicably connected with the most depraved harem-favourite on the one hand and with the Pope on the other.

[1] See the life of Commodus by Lampridius in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (cap. X) and the English translation of Dion Cassius's *History of Rome* (LXXII, 4), or my *Empresses of Rome* (1911, ch. XI). Dion Cassius confirms that Commodus "greatly favoured the Christians." Mgr. Duchesne calls Marcia "the morganatic wife" of Commodus, and blandly observes that "her life in such surroundings could scarcely be in strict accord with Gospel precepts"! (*History of the Christian Church*, I, 183). Even the ablest and most liberal of Catholic historians tamper with the truth.

Any man who knows Roman customs will understand at once what Hippolytus means when he says that Marcia had been reared by the eunuch; though the truth is often obscured by a deliberate mistranslation of the Greek text. Duchesne, always polite, says that Hyacinthus had been Marcia's " tutor," but the word used by Hippolytus (*θρέψας*), though not classical Greek, certainly means " rearer " or foster-father. It obviously refers to the well-known Roman custom of " exposing " or leaving in some public place an unwanted female baby, and Hyacinthus was one of the men who made a profession of collecting them and at maturity selling them as slaves or prostitutes. The fact that he was a eunuch suggests that his business was to supply them to harems and brothels; and most of us will decline to think of him as a priest, however low the character of the Roman community may have sunk. But he was clearly a Christian; and Hippolytus, in describing Marcia as " God-loving," must mean that the eunuch had brought her up as a Christian.

She had just reached the height of her power when Pope Eleutherius died and Victor was elected. Whether the initiative lay with her or the eunuch or, as is most probable, the Pope, it was arranged that Victor should go to the palace and beg the liberation of the Christians who were in the Sardinian mines. We shall so often in the course of this work find Popes of the highest character paying fulsome compliments to royal sinners that we will not attempt to deduce from this visit anything about the character of Victor; though it is obvious that it was quite possible to have a list of the Christian convicts sent to the palace without the bishop needing to visit the Emperor's sybaritic harem. Doubtless the Pope had an eye to further favours. We may assume that, since Marcia continued for three years to lead the revels and orgies at the palace, some share of her wealth and that of the Emperor would surely have reached the Church.

Victor is the first Pope to be quoted by Catholic writers as claiming and exercising the authority of head of the universal Church. There are few parts of their apologetic in which they are so reckless as when they profess to find evidence that even in the first five centuries of the Christian Era the other Churches acknowledged the supremacy of the Roman bishop. No prelate, priest, or Church in the East ever entertained the claim; and it was rejected with the same disdain by every bishop in the West until, in the fifth century, the Empire was wrecked by the Goths and Vandals and Rome alone could maintain a bishop of any importance. Victor's claim of authority over other Churches was so angrily resented in East and West, as a novel piece of impudence, that no Pope ventured to repeat it until more than half a century later.

It was a premature assertion of the ambition which the immense prestige of Rome under the Antonine Emperors and the deterioration of the character of the Church were now enkindling in the Roman clergy. Whether this led to the interpolation, about that time, in Matthew (xvi, 18) of the famous pun, " Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church," [1] or the Roman clergy seized upon the text as a priceless basis for their claim, we do not know. But from this time onward we get occasional evidence that the growing wealth of the Roman Church and its position in the world's metropolis have inspired the dream of ruling the Christian world. The claim to do so was, we shall see, consistently and emphatically rejected by the other Churches until, at the end of the fifth century, the Pope found himself surveying a world of ruins from the more substantial ruins of Rome: a world which was rapidly sinking into

[1] If we insert the Aramaic word which would be used in Judæa, we see more clearly that it *is* a pun, and is completely alien to the character of Jesus as this is depicted in the Gospels. The interpolation then runs: "Thou art *Kipha*, and upon this *Kipha* I will build my Church." The use of the word Church is itself a flagrant anachronism.

the densest ignorance. The Papacy became by an inexorable historical development "the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof."

Bishop Eusebius, of the fourth century, tells us in his *Ecclesiastical History* (V, 24) about this first futile assertion of the Roman ambition and of the vigorous repudiation of it. There was at the time an acute controversy about the date on which Easter ought to be celebrated. We must remember that Easter was then the greatest, if not the only, ecclesiastical festival; for December 25 was the supreme festival of the pagan and the Mithraic calendars and was an abomination to Christians. At Easter the bishops of the various Churches communicated with each other, sending their consecrated bread—they were evidently still far from a doctrine of transubstantiation—across hundreds of miles of sea and land, as one now sends little boxes of wedding-cake. The difference in the date of celebrating was, therefore, inconvenient, and Pope Victor ordered the bishops of Asia Minor to abandon their custom and conform to that of Rome.

Eusebius does not give us the text of the Pope's letter, but he dilates with pleasure upon the sequel. Bishop Polycrates of Ephesus, to whom the Pope had written, sent a contemptuous refusal. "I am," he wrote, "not moved by your attempt to intimidate us"; and he says that all the other bishops agree with him. Victor pompously excommunicated them, or declared that in future he would not send consecrated bread to them at Easter—it is an error to suppose that excommunication meant what it does to-day—and they "bitterly reproached Victor" for his arrogance and his spurious claim of authority, and maintained their own method of dating Easter. There was an outcry against Rome throughout the Church. Irenæus of Lyons "courteously warned" Victor that he had gone too far; and years later we find the chief scholar of the African Church,

Tertullian, writing with biting irony of some Roman Pope who calls himself "the Supreme Pontiff" and "the Bishop of Bishops."[1]

Victor spent the remaining years of his episcopate (189—198) in an exasperating series of heresy-hunts. The East next sent to Rome one Theodotus, a tanner or leather-merchant, with a new shade of theology. Theodotus the money-lender joined him, and, as they seem to have been men of character and culture as well as wealth, they attracted a large number of members and, when Victor excommunicated them, set up a rival bishop. Then Florinus, who had been an official at the palace and had entered the Roman clergy, put new life into the Gnostics by joining them; and the Pope had again to be warned by other bishops that he was tolerating heresy.

Since the Marcionites still prospered at Rome, there were now three rival Christian sects distracting the Roman community; and the confusion increased when disciples of the fanatical Phrygian Montanus and his two neurotic female companions came to Rome with the tidings that the Apostolic Age was not over and every Christian was still directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that priests were superfluous. Since the Marcionites and Montanists maintained the moral austerity of the early days, while the Roman community steadily deteriorated, they attracted many of the best men and women of the time. Tertullian, the leading Christian writer, was a Montanist, and we shall find him presently spitting his scorn at the vices of the Pope's followers.

Victor died in the year 198 and bequeathed his sore burden to Zephyrinus: "an ignorant and illiterate man" according to Hippolytus, who knew him well. He was just one more of the entirely obscure mediocrities, with two exceptions, who ruled the Roman Church during the first four centuries of its life. Other Churches, the Churches over which the Roman bishops had a pretension

[1] *On Chastity*, ch. I.

to rule, had their Cyrils and Clements, their Basils and Cyprians and Chrysostoms, but in the richest of all the Churches the only two Popes who in four hundred years left a definite impression even in ecclesiastical history, Callistus and Damasus—for Victor remains a shadow-Pope of whose person and character we know nothing—were men of tainted repute. Callistus, the ex-slave and crooked financier, was the strong or astute man who guided the counsels of the distracted new Pope, and we turn back to Hippolytus for the continuation of his picturesque career.

When the eunuch Hyacinthus took to Sardinia the list of the Christians who were to be released, Callistus learned that his name was not on the list. He had not been sent to the mines as a Christian, but as a common malefactor. He somehow persuaded the eunuch to insert his name, and he returned to Rome. But feeling was still so strong against him that he was sent into a comfortable exile in the fashionable watering-place, Antium, where he remained until the death of Victor. The new Pope, Zephyrinus—notice how nearly every name in connection with the Church is still Greek—was, Hippolytus says, as venal and greedy as he was ignorant, and Callistus soon obtained by bribery the position of first deacon (archdeacon) and the charge of the finances of the Church. He bought a cemetery or catacomb which still ironically bears the name of " St. Callistus," and in ways which Hippolytus rather obscurely describes he organized the community, strengthened the authority of the bishop over the clergy, and broadened the line which already separated the clergy from the laity.

These confused passages give one a vague impression of rapid growth alike in numbers, wealth, and clerical organization. The time, indeed, was favourable to such growth, for, apart from the condemnation of some of them to the mines by Marcus Aurelius, there had been no persecution of the Christians of Rome for more than a

century. The truculent Emperor Septimius Severus had enforced an old law which forbade the Jews and the Christians to make converts, and there seem to have been martyrs in the provinces. But there was no persecution at Rome. The Empress, a Syrian lady of considerable and liberal interest in religion and of easy morals, had, Tertullian says, given her son Caracalla a Christian nurse and a Christian tutor. Tertullian, it is true, had done better to conceal the fact, for the Emperor Caracalla, who slew his half-brother in his mother's arms and massacred twenty thousand of the finest men and women in Rome, grew up to be an inhuman monster. Yet the lenient attitude towards the Christians continued, and the Church grew. It is not pleasant to reflect that, apart from the reign of Alexander Severus, the early Roman Church prospered most under three of the most vicious emperors: Commodus, Caracalla, and Elagabal. The activity of Callistus as first deacon was in the reign of the brutal Caracalla, while his pontificate (217—222) coincided with the reign of Elagabal, a freak of sexual perversity.

We must, however, not be misled by the obscure statements of Hippolytus. When, for instance, he says that Callistus divided Rome into twenty-five parishes, each with its priests and deacons, we are apt to imagine twenty-five parish churches with crowds of worshippers attending mass. This is wholly false. In his biographical account of Alexander Severus in the *Historia Augusta* Lampridius tells us that the Emperor at his accession (222) proposed to give the Christians a licence to build temples. His counsellors dissuaded him, but, when Pope Callistus claimed "a place that had been public" in their settlement across the river and a tavern-keeper disputed the claim, Alexander allotted it to the Christians. Here, all agree, Callistus opened the first public meeting-place or basilica—the common Roman name for a public hall—as the *Pontifical Chronicle* expressly says. The only

point that is open to doubt is whether he bought a site to build upon or an abandoned wine-shop which he converted into a basilica. In either case, down to the year 222 the Roman Christians had had no chapels.

We will return later to this point. It remains here only to tell how the heretical gnats continued to irritate the community, and, since the Pope was too ignorant to understand their subtleties and his chief deacon was more competent at finance than in intellectual matters, the confusion was worse than ever. To the Gnostics with their sonorous verbiage, the Marcionites with their fierce opposition to the Old Testament, and the Montanists with their stern puritanism and asceticism there was now added a new plague from the East.

The Greeks had entered upon the fateful task of defining in the exact terms of philosophy the mystic relation of the Father and the Son, and one of the most subtle and persuasive of the heretics had come to Rome and captured the dull-witted Pope. But whether, as Hippolytus says, Callistus secretly supported both sides, or what it was all about, will hardly enkindle a flicker of interest in the modern mind. We will consider rather how, when Zephyrinus died in the year 217 and Callistus succeeded him, he abolished all that remained of the grim barriers which had for a century repelled sinners from the Church: how he converted the Greek colony into the Church of Rome, the exclusive and virtuous brotherhood into a warmer and more hospitable body, the early simplicity into a ritualistic sacerdotalism.

CHAPTER III

CALLISTUS HUMANIZES THE CHURCH

THERE is a type of reader who, though he may not be a Catholic, will here suggest that this seems to be an account only of the less attractive features of the history of the Roman Church. The quite candid and humane historian would, he will say, devote just as much space to the beautiful spirit of the early domestic assemblies, the dim-lit, throbbing services in the catacombs while brothers watch at the entrance for Roman guards, the saintly Popes and heroic martyrs, as to the arrogance of Victor and the chicanery of Callistus. There are many such works. They contain three times as much legend as historical fact, and the general impression they convey of Church-life after the first century is entirely false. To the virtue of the first century I paid ample tribute in the first chapter—indeed, it would be nearer the truth to charge me with dilating upon it more than the very scanty evidence justifies—but down to the period we have reached, the first half of the third century, the only accounts we have of services in the catacombs are taken from fiction: we have not a single authentic story of a Roman martyrdom; and we have no knowledge whatever of the character of the Popes.

And since it is common for works of the conciliatory kind to represent the Roman community as, even in the second and third centuries, a body of humble and austere folk who shudder at the naked vices of the city, let us put this story of Callistus and the first corruption of the Church in its correct historical frame. The hectic vices of the Neros and Elagabals of the series of Emperors

are often, and most unjustly, regarded as representative of Roman life. Of the thirty men—to omit those who ruled for only a few months—who wore the purple from the founding of the Empire to the conversion of Constantine, five only were depraved in character; and these ruled only during twenty-eight out of the three hundred and fifty years, while Emperors of decent, generally high, character occupied the throne during more than two hundred years. The corrupt Emperors were, as a rule, assassinated by the army or the Romans within a few years of their accession.

Caracalla was, we saw, one of the few brutal Emperors. But the anger of Rome had soon driven him from the city, and it had resumed the orderly life which it had had under his father, Septimius Severus, who had been as stern against vice as any early Christian. Most people are surprised when they learn that Roman law prescribed the death-penalty for adultery, though even Septimius Severus could not prevail upon the humane civic authorities to inflict that excessive penalty. His wife, a Syrian lady of considerable accomplishments, and her sister had really ruled Rome while he fought at the frontiers, and had sought to bring it back to the high standard of the age of Hadrian. They had restored the ladies' club, with an intellectual atmosphere (a sort of ancient Lyceum Club), which Hadrian's wife had founded and had summoned round them an elegant circle of the leading poets and moralists of the time.

The brutal interlude of the reign of Caracalla had lasted only six years, and he had spent little time in the city of Rome. The morbid reign of Elagabal, which followed, had lasted only four years when he was contemptuously cut to pieces by the soldiers in the latrines of the camp. Another lady of the Syrian family, Julia Mamæa, a woman of strong and high character and considerable ability, had then for thirteen years helped her son, Alexander Severus, one of the gentlest and most

liberal of the Emperors, to raise the life of the city and the Empire to the Antonine level. In coming from the East to Rome, Julia had, at Antioch, invited the learned Christian writer Origen to explain his religion to her. It had made no intellectual appeal to her, but she had taught her son to regard it favourably. As is well known, Alexander had a bust of Christ amongst those of other prophets in his private chapel. His mother and he shared the belief of most of the cultivated Romans who were not Epicureans (Atheists), that all popular religions were confused perceptions of some God whose real nature was hidden behind their various creeds and rituals. They were broken rays of sunlight on clouds of myth.

This was the situation in Rome when, some time after the Christians became free to build chapels, Pope Callistus set out to make his Church more attractive to the Romans. The plain appeal of the Gospel-story had in a century and a quarter of peace won only a few thousands out of the hundreds of thousands of citizens. The austere code of the Church must be softened: the gaunt simplicity of its services must be clothed with art.

It had hitherto been the rule in the Church, and it was still the rule in other parts of the Christian world, that baptism alone could remove the stain of grave sin, so that a baptized person who committed carnal sin even once must be expelled from the community and never permitted to return. Callistus, recalling such texts as "Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven," which had been interpolated in the Gospels in the course of the second century, said that he could re-admit such sinners to communion if they repented. A wave of rigorist indignation swept over the Church. Just about this time the African Father Tertullian wrote his treatise *On Chastity*, and in the first chapter the sombre moralist breaks out:—

> I hear that an edict has gone forth. The Supreme Pontiff, that is to say the Bishop of Bishops, announces: I will absolve even those who are guilty of adultery and fornication, if they do penance.

At Rome Hippolytus and the dissident puritans were scornful. But Callistus had done more than open the gates to a crowd of frivolous Romans: he had laid the foundation of the mighty power which the clergy would one day exercise through the confessional.

This relaxation of the ancient discipline would overcome the reluctance of many inquiring Romans, and other relaxations followed. Hippolytus, whose Greek text is never elegant and is often far from lucid, becomes almost incoherent in his indignation when he describes the next measure of accommodation.

> For even also he permitted females, if they were unwedded and burned with passion at an age at all events unbecoming, or if they were not disposed to overturn their dignity through a legal marriage, that they might have whomsoever they would choose as a bedfellow, whether slave or free, and that they, though not legally married, might consider such an one as a husband.[1]

This seems alarmingly liberal if one does not know a certain clause of Roman law. It prescribed that the widow or daughter of a Senator could not validly marry a slave or freedman, and that she would forfeit her title of honour, which was equivalent to " Excellency," if she married a free-born man of inferior condition.

We may assume that there were no men of senatorial rank in the Church for widows of that order to marry, and the Pope must mean that Christians shall regard them as married, not as living in sin, if they enter into permanent association with any man, whether slave, freedman, or freeborn, although, in order to retain their titles, they have contracted none of the legally recognized forms of marriage with him. We cannot suppose that there were many women of senatorial rank in the Church, but the new rule would inevitably lead to some relaxation of morals. If we accept the assurance of Hippolytus, scandals soon arose. It is clear that one aim of the Pope

[1] So the text is translated in the Ante-Nicene Library, Vol. VI, p. 346.

was to dissuade rich Christian widows from marrying pagans, and one can imagine their conduct when the intercourse which the Church now allowed them to have with some slave or freedman of the household had consequences which threatened to become public. In reply to the rigorists, the Pope searched the Scriptures for texts which seemed to support his policy. Had not the Ark, the symbol of salvation, contained both clean and unclean animals? Had not Christ said that the tares must be suffered to grow up with the wheat? The age of heroic virtue was over; but we will not discuss the character of the new Church until, later, we find definite evidence of it.

The relaxation of discipline was extended to the clergy: with, as we shall see later, disastrous results. Henceforward even a bishop must not, if he repents, be deposed for having indulged in sins of the flesh. Men who have been married twice, or even three times, may become priests, and " men in orders " are free to marry. The Catholic suggests that this means men in " minor " orders, but these were already free. There was not, in fact, and would not be until nine hundred years later, a Church-law of clerical celibacy, but there was a strong feeling throughout the early Church that no cleric must incur the " taint " of the flesh. Callistus genially waved his pontifical arm, and new types of men found their way into the clerical body.

A more important part of the work of Callistus and his successors, and an even more flagrant departure from the primitive simplicity of the Church, was the transformation of the original prayer-meeting and supper into an elaborate and artistic service which might compete with the ceremonies of rival religions. We saw that Callistus opened the first Christian church at Rome and organized the clergy. The sanctuary line was now firmly drawn between clergy and laity, and the ceremony performed within the sanctuary steadily developed about this time

into the Roman Catholic " mass." Experts, smiling at the ingenuous explanation of Catholic writers who affect to believe that these sacerdotal and ritualist developments were carried out in accordance with instructions which Jesus had whispered to Peter, and Peter to his successors, find it difficult to trace the evolution, but the broad explanation is surely clear enough.

The Persian cult of Mithra had recently won considerable popularity at Rome, and its chief temple lay on the fringe of the Christian settlement in the Vatican district, a near neighbour of their new basilica. Here priests in white or coloured robes performed, amidst lighted candles and fumes of incense, a ceremony of consecrating bread and wine at the altar. Services in the temples of Isis ended with a Greek phrase which closely resembles the *Ite, missa est* at the end of the Catholic mass (*missa*). The Romans were unable to understand religion without such artistic expression. It was as familiar in the cults of Isis and Cybele as in the State-cult of the gods. It would be childish to suppose that the Roman Church did not borrow from these its ritual decorations and robes, just as its bishop borrowed the title of Supreme (or Sovereign) Pontiff from the head of the State-religion.

Callistus died before the end of the first year of the reign of Alexander Severus, and it was mainly his successors, Urban and Pontianus—there is a hint of this in the *Pontifical Chronicle*—who took advantage of the favour of Alexander and his mother during the next thirteen years to shape the Church in accordance with the new policy. " These men," Hippolytus grumbles, " lost to all shame, call themselves a Catholic Church, for some, supposing that they will attain prosperity, concur with them."

It is an amusing sign of the recklessness with which the later Roman clergy fabricated martyrs that they made large numbers of them die just in this most favourable

period that the Roman Christians had yet enjoyed. The truth is that Alexander Severus was so generous to them that when he died, in the year 235, the gigantic Goth Maximin who succeeded him—he is said to have been eight feet high and to have eaten forty pounds of meat in a day—fell angrily upon them. It is, however, under the influence of the later forgers that Gibbon makes Maximin "discharge his fury" upon the Roman Christians. Even Professor Benigni, of the Papal College at Rome, finds that the life of the Roman Community was "hardly interrupted by Maximin." Martyrdoms elsewhere do not concern us, but against all the harrowing stories we may put the assurance of Origen, ten years after the death of Maximin, that "down to the present day those who have died for the Christian religion are few and easily counted." [1]

The fact is that the Roman community, which is so commonly represented as shuddering in the Catacombs while agents of bloody tyrants hunt for Christians, enjoyed more than a century and a half of almost unbroken peace from the death of Domitian (who, moreover, is not known to have put many of them to death) to the accession of Decius (96 to 250). During all this period, however, there is only one Pope, Callistus, whose character is known to us or who has left any impression in history, so we must continue to consider the Roman Church as a developing institution.

For a time, in the year 244, it was lit with a new hope. Word came from the East that Philip the Arab had been proclaimed Emperor, and that Philip and his wife were Christians. But Catholic historians here turn very critically upon evidence which elsewhere they use so liberally in their own interest. They find that the historical conscience forbids them to describe Philip as

[1] *Centra Celsum*, III, 8. Origen is meeting the charge of a pagan that the Christians are as disloyal as the Jews and have to be punished.

a Christian: which means, of course, that he is one of the villains of the imperial series.

The sleek and cunning son of a bandit-chief of the desert, Philip had ingratiated himself with and had been rapidly promoted by the young and attractive Emperor Gordianus. By a series of repulsive intrigues he had then induced the troops to murder Gordianus and give him the purple. He was slain in a few years, and his relation to the Christians of Rome is obscure, but he had clearly been a Christian. Bishop Eusebius tells us (VI, 36) that he had seen the letters which Origen wrote to Philip and his wife, and that it is a tradition of the Eastern Church that the Bishop of Antioch imposed a public penance upon them for the murder of the Emperor. It is, in fact, more than a tradition, for in a sermon he preached on the same bishop (*De Sancto Babyla*) Chrysostom lauds this as one of his most conscientious acts; and Jerome and all later Christian historians describe Philip and his wife as Christians.

The support which the Christians had given to the unscrupulous Arab now brought upon them the first general persecution. It is true that the Emperor Decius had other grounds for his severity. He was in sentiment, though not by birth, a patriotic Roman of the old type, and he had observed with increasing anger how Syrians and Arabs dishonoured the purple, and how for a hundred years or more foreign cults had made progress to the detriment of the State religion upon which, he believed, the welfare of the Empire depended. The extent of the persecution has, however, been much exaggerated. The terms of the decree against Christianity have not been preserved, and some writers infer from references to it that Decius had no wish to press the death-sentence. There does not, in any case, seem to have been a rigorous search for Christians, and the persecution ended in a few months.

There seem to have been many put to death in the

East, but according to the contemporary Bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius, the "universal apostasy" was more dreadful than the martyrdoms. Priests, even bishops, publicly denied the faith. Eusebius (VI, 41) tells a sordid story and quotes Bishop Dionysius as saying:

> Summoned by name and invited to sacrifice, most of them advanced, pale and trembling, as though they had come, not to sacrifice, but to be sacrificed themselves. The crowds gathered for the spectacle laughed them to scorn.

And the Roman Christians were as faithless as those of Alexandria. The writer on the persecutions in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* tells his readers that, in spite of the laxity into which the Church had drifted during thirty years of peace—he ought to have said a hundred and fifty years—there were at Rome more martyrs than traitors. Since all Catholic historians hold that there were at this time thirty or forty thousand Christians at Rome, the devout reader must think of appalling hecatombs. It happens that we have a sound historical study of this persecution,[1] and the author, after a careful examination of the claims of martyrdoms at Rome, even admitting some evidence which an expert would now reject, says that he has been able to find "the names of, at most, *six* Christians who met their death at Rome in the Decian persecution." Yet with this result of a scholarly inquiry before him—that only six out of at least twenty thousand Christians were martyred—the Catholic writer tells his readers that there were more martyrs than traitors!

Fabianus is the first, almost the only, Pope whom we definitely know to have died for his faith, yet he is given in every Catholic list, popular or academic, as the *twentieth* Pope who was "saint and martyr." Of nearly fifty priests of his Church only two were arrested and imprisoned, and of nearly a hundred clerics of less degree

[1] J. A. F. Gregg, *The Decian Persecution*, 1897.

four only seem to have died for the faith. We do not suppose that the Prefects had a search made for all, or even the majority, of the Roman Christians, but there was clearly the same rush as Bishop Dionysius describes in the East of men and women to offer incense to the gods or to bribe officials to give them fraudulent certificates.

We begin to see upon what spurious evidence is based the pious proverb that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians. Whatever proportion of the small early community may have suffered under Nero or Domitian, the persecutions of Maximin and Decius had very few victims at Rome; and we shall see the same about later persecutions. As soon as the storm had passed we find the new Pope, Cornelius, boasting, in a letter which is preserved in Eusebius (VI, 43), that he has under him forty-four priests, fourteen deacons and subdeacons, and ninety-four minor clerics; and that they support fifteen hundred widowed, poor, or sick members of the Church. And we have the Catholic writers who on the previous page represented the Church as almost drowned in its blood now inferring from these figures that it must, immediately after the persecution, have had fifty thousand members! How it would accommodate them in its two small chapels one wonders; but it is absurd to count a thousand members to each priest. That is a high average in a modern city. As to the fifteen hundred dependants, we must remember that Rome at this time made a remarkably generous provision for such people and distributed free food to all the workers, so that the Church had to make special efforts to keep its poorer members away from the pagan officials.

The re-assembled Church, instead of having been chastened by the persecution, was now swept by a whirlwind of domestic passion. What was to be done with those who had burned incense on the pagan altars or had bought fraudulent certificates—a few of these have been found in Egypt—that they had sacrificed? The storm

raged in every province of the Church, and out of it came a more formidable schism than any that had preceded. Cornelius, another obscure mediocrity of the Papal succession, gave facile absolution in the new Roman manner, but he was vigorously opposed by one of the most influential priests of his Church, Novatianus: an accomplished man, well versed in philosophy, and very popular. He demanded stern disciplinary measures against apostates, and he formed so large a party that he was elected anti-Pope and founded a separate Church which spread over Italy and lasted two centuries.

The troubles of the Pope increased when a group of priests who had been deposed at Carthage came to Rome to secure, and obtain, its cheaper absolution. The African province of the Roman Empire was at this time as prosperous and advanced as Italy itself, and its Church gave three scholars to Western Christianity for any one that Rome contributed. The modern Catholic writer, therefore, finds in this appeal a second proof of recognition of the Pope's supremacy. He does not make it clear that the only such appeals that the Pope received from Africa were appeals of priests and bishops of disorderly life, but his conduct in describing the sequel is even graver. The Bishop of Carthage and head of the African Church at the time was Cyprian, one of the most esteemed of the Latin Fathers. Because he somewhere acknowledges that the Roman is " the principal Church " and " the source of sacerdotal unity," Catholic apologists unanimously quote him as one who recognized the Pope's supremacy. Yet we still have the lengthy letters which Cyprian wrote to Cornelius and his successor, and in these Cyprian, from first to last, scornfully repudiates the Roman claim to have any sort of authority in Africa.

He is very candid (*Ep.* LIV) about the shocking moral condition of both clergy and laity in his Church. Cardinal Newman wrote a novel, which is still treasured in Catholic libraries, about life in the African Church at

this time. It is the kind of work from which Positivists derive their knowledge. Priests and people are as virtuous as in the first century, and are heroically ready for martyrdom. Yet Newman, an assiduous reader of the early Fathers, must surely have seen the letters in which Cyprian described the state of the African Church. He assures Cornelius that the priests who have appealed to him are " a band of desperadoes " whom he had very properly excommunicated. He describes " the pseudo-bishop " who accompanies them as " an embezzler of money entrusted to him, the violator of virgins, the destroyer and corruptor of many marriages." They have appealed to Rome only because, since the days of Callistus, absolution is cheap there, and the Pope had no right to listen to them. " For," he says (*Ep.* 14), " it is decreed by all of us, and is equally fair and just, that the case of every man should be judged where the crime was committed."

A few years later Cyprian sent a contemptuous letter (*Ep.* LXVII) to the successor of Cornelius, Pope Stephen. The Bishop of Arles has joined the Novatianists, and the other bishops of Gaul have appealed to the Pope to condemn him. Another proof of recognition of Papal supremacy, says the apologist. Yet it is plainly stated in Cyprian's letter that the bishops of Gaul have appealed equally to Carthage and Rome, and Cyprian is scolding the Pope because he has not done *his* part. " *We who hold the balance in governing the Church* " is Cyprian's description of himself and the Roman Bishop. Pope Stephen, another pompous mediocrity, threatens anathemas, and Cyprian gathers his eighty African bishops in council; and they send (*Ep.* LXXII) as disdainful a reply to the Pope's claim as any Protestant would make today. They write:—

> *We* judge no man, and *we* cut off no man for differing from us. None of us regards himself as the Bishop of Bishops or seeks by tyrannical threats to compel his colleagues to obey him.

Cyprian, the greatest Christian leader of the third century, head of one of the chief branches of the Church and more famous for learning and piety than any Pope in four centuries, wrote pages in this vein; and Rome retorted by calling him "a false Christ" and "false Apostle" and refused hospitality to his envoys. Yet I do not know a single Catholic writer who does not claim that Cyprian recognized the supremacy of the Pope!

What manner of men these were who continued to forge their credentials and issue pontifical orders in spite of every rebuff we do not know. They are still mere names to us, shadow-Popes. Not one of them stands out in ecclesiastical history as Tertullian and Cyprian do. If one reads the article on each Pope to the middle of the fourth century in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, one finds that all, except Callistus, are just pale abstractions to which the writer attaches a few technical details from the semi-legendary *Pontifical Chronicle*.[1] The procession of ghosts marches slowly on. Persecution rages again to some extent—directed now only against the clergy and higher officials—under Valerian, and Pope Xystus or Sixtus II and six of his deacons are said to have been executed. But Valerian's son and successor refuses to persecute, and restores to the Roman Church its chapels and catacombs; and forty years of peace, during which no event of interest occurs, enable it to recover its strength and appeal once more to the pagans. During this half-century, says Duchesne, "the history of the Church in the West is entirely lost to sight."

This half-century of peace is one of the periods when, according to the Catholic writer, the Roman Church was permitted to exhibit the austerity of its virtue to the Roman people and win their hearts. He imagines tens of

[1] This Latin work, the *Liber Pontificalis*, is an official chronicle of the Popes compiled by the Roman clergy. But even the first part of it does not seem to have been written until the seventh century. The writer says little about the Popes of the first three centuries; and his Latin is atrocious. Dr. Loomis has translated the book into English with the title *The Book of the Popes* (1916).

thousands of Romans, weary of their vices or repelled by the vices of their neighbours, sinking to their knees at the foot of the Cross. He even, though his ignorance of Roman history, except in the medieval version of it, is complete, tells his readers that the Empire, sapped by the vices of its citizens, was rapidly decaying, and that the Roman Church was invigorating its heart with the preaching and practice of virtue. Far too many of our historical writers and literary men now fancy that it is required of the liberal and superior mind to repeat these statements; yet they are insolently opposed to the little historical evidence we have about the life of this second half of the third century.

It happens that just in this period occurs the reign of Aurelian and his high-minded Empress; and Aurelian, a deeply religious man, was so stern a puritan that, when he was told that a soldier in his army had seduced the wife of a man in whose house he had been billeted, he had the soldier torn in halves. And the last twenty years of the century passed under the rule of Diocletian, the strongest, wisest, and most effective Emperor since Hadrian.

On the Christian side we have no direct evidence about the life of the Roman community, but it is included in the indictment which Bishop Eusebius brings against the whole Church when, in the next generation, he explains why God permitted, or sent, the last and greatest of the persecutions:—

> Since from our great freedom we had fallen into negligence and sloth, when each had begun to envy and slander the other, when we waged intestine war against each other, wounding each other with words as with swords and spears, when leaders assailed leaders and people assailed people, hurling epithets at each other, when fraud and hypocrisy had reached the highest height of malice . . . when, devoid of all sense, we gave no thought to the worship of God, but believing, like certain impious men, that human affairs are controlled by no Providence, we heaped crime upon crime, when

> our pastors, despising the rule of religion, fought with each other, intent upon nothing but abuse, threats, jealousy, hatred, and mutual enmity, each claiming for himself a principality as a sort of tyranny. . . .[1]

The work of Hippolytus and the letters of Cyprian ought to have prepared any candid student for this. We shall now see that the stern test of a drastic general persecution discloses how painfully the indictment applies to the Roman Church at the end of the third century.

[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, VIII, 1.

CHAPTER IV

FROM PERSECUTION TO A SHOWER OF GOLD

THE ten years from 303 to 313 are the most dramatic in the entire history of the Papacy. Forty years of peace had given the new generation of Roman Christians a feeling that the age of persecution was over, and they moved freely amongst the pagan citizens. Some writers estimate that they now numbered about a hundred thousand, but these have a false idea of the proportion of laymen to priests. The Church had probably between twenty and thirty thousand members, and they shared the prosperity which had come to Rome through the restoration of the Empire by the last great pagan Emperor, Diocletian. It seemed, moreover, that the Emperor was favourable to Christianity. He had built a palace at Nicomedia in Asia Minor, and the news came that his court was full of Christians, many of whom held high positions in it. When the further news came that his wife and daughter had joined the Church, and that he had permitted the erection of a fine basilica, which they attended, in view of his palace, the prospect was golden.

In the nineteenth year of the reign of the great Emperor the Romans heard that Diocletian had begun to persecute, and presently the Prefects published in his name a series of decrees which aimed at the annihilation of the Christian religion. All churches must be destroyed; all copies of the Scriptures burned; every citizen must offer incense to the gods. There was a rush to the altars or to the buildings where cynical officials sold false certificates of sacrifice. The Pope led the betrayal. Doubtless groups gathered again in the Catacombs or on the hills,

but for three years they heard from every part of the Empire only of burning churches, vast apostasies, a few martyrdoms. The Church seemed to be doomed.

In the third year Diocletian, sick and saddened by the consequences of his policy, abdicated, and the Romans heard that Constantius, who now ruled half the Western Empire, was favourable to Christians This hope vanished when he died in the following year, and the persecution was sporadically renewed; besides that the grave problem of the tens of thousands of apostates weighed heavily upon what was left of the Church. A new hope was lit when the message reached Rome that Constantine, son of Constantius, had succeeded his father; and through six anxious years the Christians followed the fortunes of that robust prince as he hewed his bloody path to the palace at Rome. By the year 313 Constantine was strong enough to compel his colleague in the purple to join him in a declaration that henceforward every citizen of the Empire was free to worship in his own way " whatever divinity there is on the throne of heaven "; and a few months later the Pope and his Italian colleagues were, at the Empress's invitation, meeting in the gorgeous old palace of the Laterani family to discuss their affairs.

We need not here consider why Diocletian, after nineteen years of toleration, decided to destroy Christianity. The more plausible reasons which are assigned for his change of mood are that the Christians of the palace had become " insolent "—which we take to mean too outspoken about paganism—and that military discipline was weakened by their refusal to take the customary oath. Since the first hostile act of the Emperor was to order the destruction of the church at Nicomedia and his decree was torn from the wall by a Christian officer, the former of these theories seems to be sound. Diocletian, though of humble origin, had a strong sense of imperial dignity, and the outrage would deeply anger him. He was now easily persuaded that the several million Christians of the Empire were a

menace, and he ordered the destruction of all their churches and sacred writings and the dismissal of all officers and officials who would not abjure the faith. This led, not unnaturally, to grave disorders, and decrees of increasing rigour were issued until torture or death was prescribed for all who refused to sacrifice.

However many may have perished in the provinces, there appear to have been few victims at Rome. Within ten years of this persecution the Roman Christians were free to take their place in the sun and to compare and record their memories, yet, we saw, Catholic experts find very few genuine martyrs. Of stories, and very picturesque stories, there are, of course, legions. Even the most cultivated writers of the time are more intent upon edification than accuracy, and occasionally they admit this. The orator Lactantius, who taught first in Nicomedia, where Diocletian lived, and later in the palace of Constantine, must have been one of the best informed men of the time, yet he wrote a work, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, which amazes or amuses historians by its fertility of imagination and audacity of invention. Bishop Eusebius, a close associate for years of the Emperor Constantine, wrote a life of that prince which the distinguished Catholic historian Duchesne politely calls " a triumph of reticence and circumlocution."

Later legend-weavers were so reckless that they included Diocletian's wife, Prisca, in the list of martyrs under three different and equally fictitious names, whereas it is not disputed that Prisca and her daughter had at once set an imperial example by abjuring the faith. The *Pontifical Chronicle* itself admits that Pope Marcellinus saved his life by offering incense on the pagan altar, but it goes on to say that he repented and died for the faith; whereas that Pope, as Duchesne shows, died in his bed a year before he is supposed to have been executed. Duchesne professes to find a score of genuine stories of martyrdom under Diocletian, but only one or two of these martyrs are Romans.

We have to fall back upon Father Delehaye's more critical verdict, that there are no genuine Acts of Roman martyrs. In other words, with very few exceptions the twenty to thirty thousand—fifty thousand, if you prefer the Catholic estimate—surrendered their copies of Scripture and either offered incense or bought spurious certificates that they had performed that act of pagan piety. The whole Church groaned under the task of dealing with " traitors " and " lapsed," but the Pope absolved them in the genial Roman manner, and they basked in the flood of imperial sunshine. Constantine made short work of all rival Emperors and Cæsars and installed himself in the old palace at Rome, sole master of the Empire and zealous patron of Christianity.

Many books have been written about the conversion of Constantine, yet how and to what extent he was converted is as obscure as ever. Eusebius, who must many a time have heard the truth from him, conceals it behind a preposterous legend that, when he approached Rome for his final battle, a cross with the words " Under this standard shalt thou conquer " appeared in the heavens; and the Emperor piously swore to fulfil the omen. The truth, as far as we know it, is romantic enough. Forty years earlier Constantius the Yellow, his father, a handsome young officer on campaign in the Balkans, was so pleased with the comeliness of a young woman who served him with wine in a wayside tavern that he brought her away as his mistress.[1] She bore him the handsome Constantine, but Diocletian compelled the father to dismiss her when he was raised to imperial rank, and had the boy reared in the palace at Nicomedia.

The youth would surely be intrigued to see the Empress Prisca and her daughter attending the Christian Church; and from the fact that, when he became Emperor, he

[1] Ambrose (even in a sermon on her), Jerome, and all the Christian writers who follow them give this account of Helena, and some of them expressly ascribe to her the customary morals of a tavern-wench of Roman days. See my *Empresses of Rome*, 1911, pp. 265–270.

summoned Lactantius to be tutor to his illegitimate son Crispus, we may infer that he had himself known the Christian Lactantius in Nicomedia. If we further remember that his father, whom he joined in Britain, favoured the Christians, we have ample explanation of his interest in Christianity. But the exact nature of his belief until, at the close of his life, he accepted baptism is as obscure as the creed of Napoleon. All his life he held the title of Supreme Pontiff of the pagan religion and directed the performance of its ceremonies, yet he behaved as a Christian monarch and used all his influence, short of coercion, to secure the triumph of the Church.

The lavishness of his generosity must have dazzled eyes that had just emerged from a long period of gloom. During four years after the death of Marcellinus, the Roman Christians were too scattered and few in number to elect a Pope. Then, in 308 and 309, two more shadow-Popes cross the stage, and there is another interval of two years, for the city is again under a hostile ruler. Pope Melchiades (311–314) is almost equally unknown to us, though we read of him claiming and securing the return of all Church property. At the end of 313 we find him, and he must have been dazed to find himself, discussing in an imperial palace the question of traitors to the faith. Constantine was impatient of such controversies. When, years later, the great struggle about the divinity of Christ raged between the Arians and Athanasians, he complained to the bishops that the ground of their quarrel was "insignificant and entirely disproportionate to such a quarrel."

He then, whatever his motive, set out to make Christianity an effective rival of the other religions of the city, and the *Pontifical Chronicle*, which to this date gives only a few crabbed lines to each Pope, now runs to thirty quarto pages about the gorgeous pontificate of Silvester I (314–335); though about the man himself we still know nothing. It takes the thirty pages to tell, very summarily,

of the superb gifts in gold and silver, bronze and precious stones and fabrics, which Constantine and his family showered upon the new churches, so that they could outshine the temples; indeed, the gifts suggest that the practice now began of looting the temples to enrich the churches. The gifts to two of these include four hundred massive silver objects and seventy of gold, often encrusted with jewels, besides magnificent bronzes and furniture. We read of one silver vessel, decorated with jewels, which stood five feet in height and weighed one hundred and twenty pounds, of seven solid silver altars weighing two hundred pounds each, and so on. Hundreds of estates were transferred to the churches to give them a revenue. Earlier Popes had given the Church two of the elements—laxity and clerical organization—of its triumph. Constantine added the third, wealth; his son would add the fourth, coercion.

From other sources we learn how villages which destroyed their pagan temples were raised to the rank of municipalities; how officers were promoted if they joined the Church; how money gifts were made to men and women who accepted baptism. We find the Pope transferred from some poor lodging across the river to " the royal house of the Laterani," as Juvenal calls it. The spacious and beautiful vestibule of this palace was converted into a church, and a Papal court began to fill the corridors and chambers. But Constantine's attempts to change the law to the advantage of the new religion failed. He issued a futile decree against divination, which was really aimed at the *auspices* of the temples, and he tried in vain to make Sunday, instead of Thursday (Thor's Day or Jupiter's Day), the workers' day of rest. As they already had about two hundred days of rest in a year, they were not attracted. His one successful service in this direction promoted the corruption of the Church and the decay of the Empire. He relieved from the burden of municipal duties, which in the Roman Empire

were not paid services but honorary functions that cost a man large sums of money, any who entered the Christian ministry. Count Beugnot, the Catholic historian, laments that " this first favour granted to Christianity admitted to its bosom guilty passions which had hitherto been foreign to it and had speedy and pernicious consequences."[1] We shall soon see what these consequences were.

Yet for several decades the Bishops of Rome remain so destitute of distinction in Church history that we must still call them shadow-Popes. The long reign of Pope Silvester is almost co-extensive with the long, and for the Church most beneficent, reign of Constantine, yet his personality is as obscure as those of his predecessors. We know only that the golden shower continued, and the Roman Church was endowed with a sum which in modern money we should estimate at many million pounds. Helena joined the Church, and her rustic energy spent itself in enriching the bishops who courted her Educated Romans grumbled that the path of ambition now lay through the chapel, while the Christians exultantly gave a new meaning to Vergil's obscure line: " Lo, the Virgin returns: the Age of Saturn comes again."

In the year 329 a new and wholly unexpected cloud threw gloom upon the Papal court and the Church, and the spirits of the pagans rose. All Rome, except the Christians, jubilantly quoted an epigram which some man, said to be an important official of the court, had nailed on the palace gate:—

> Say ye the Golden Age of Saturn comes again?
> Of Nero's bloody hue these jewels are.

For all Rome believed—and the evidence is inexorable—that Constantine had committed three horrible murders in his own family. His illegitimate son Crispus had been sent into exile some time previously and was poisoned.

[1] *Histoire de la déstruction du paganisme*, I, 78.

His wife Fausta was found suffocated in a vapour-bath. His nephew, a boy of twelve, was murdered.

It is a persistent tradition in writers of that and the following century that Constantine had discovered an intrigue between his son Crispus, a very popular youth who had been raised to the rank of Cæsar, and the Empress; though one version is that Crispus had attempted to seduce Fausta, who denounced him, and that Helena, infuriated at the fate of Crispus, had put the blame upon the Empress and demanded her death. This throws no light upon the brutal murder of the boy-nephew, and we seem to be compelled to assume a darker motive. In one of his works, St. Augustine argues that a man whose wife is barren may, consistently with Christian law, have children by a concubine.[1] This remarkable opinion may be a justification of Constantine's conduct, as many historians interpret it. There is, they say, ground to believe that Fausta was barren, and that the Emperor brought back to his palace the concubine who had been the mother of Crispus. She had three further sons, who were reputed to be sons of Fausta, and the succession to the throne presented a dark problem. It is suggested that Constantine cleared the way for the three princes by his horrible act; but, since this does not explain why Fausta was murdered, the intrigue with Crispus may have served as a pretext.[2]

It was a terrible blow to the Roman Church when Constantine, stung by the contempt of Rome, left the city and transferred the court to the East. There are historians who admire his statesmanship in giving the vast Empire a second focal centre in Constantinople, while others hold that he found Rome incurably pagan and decided to give it a magnificent Christian rival. But, while it is true that he had already decided to build a city in the East, as Diocletian had done, it was his crime

[1] *De Bono Conjugali*, cap. XV.
[2] See my *Empresses of Rome*, 1911, for full discussion (pp. 276–283).

that in fact drove him from Rome, which he never ventured to revisit. The Roman Church had, indeed, to listen to ever-deepening murmurs of the pagans about their first Christian Emperor. In a time of dwindling resources and grave need for defence he was squandering enormous sums upon his new city, and he was spending his declining years in an effeminacy—he wore a blonde wig over his white hair and glittered with jewels—which moved the pagans to mordant irony.

The story of the Popes is, as a rule, so falsely told that I must add a few lines about what would otherwise seem an irrelevant matter. Instead of the Romans crowding to the churches when the Edict of Toleration was passed, the great majority of them, as Augustine will tell us later, contemptuously resisted, in spite of imperial decrees which imposed the death-sentence, until the end of the century. And this resistance was in large part due to the disreputable character of the first Christian dynasty, the conduct of some of the Popes, and the extraordinary corruption into which the Roman Church speedily fell.

Of the character of the Constantinian dynasty I must speak summarily. Constantine died in the year 337, and the struggle for power led to scenes in the palace at Constantinople which again recalled the memory of Nero. Three sons, two half-brothers, and two sisters of the dead Emperor gathered, with their families, at the palace for the division of the spoils. We may ignore the more melodramatic stories of what happened, but it is not in dispute that, in order to make safe the succession of the three sons, all other male relatives of the Emperor except one—Julian—were murdered. Further, within a few years the eldest son was killed in a quarrel with the youngest, and some years later this Emperor, whose vices rivalled those of Elagabal, was assassinated by his disgusted officers. In thirteen years more than a score of princes and princesses of the line of Constantine were murdered; and the

second son, Constantius, who became sole Emperor by these murders, was a heretic, an Arian, who seduced most of the bishops and made more martyrs than Diocletian had made. This first Christian line, so robust in its commencement, ended in fifty years in one man of high character; and he, Julian, reverted to paganism.

Gloom settled again upon the Roman Church when its clergy learned that an Arian now had control of the entire Empire, and that the eastern Churches suffered equally from the apostasy of their bishops and the martyrdom of their faithful. So fiercely was the controversy about the divinity of Christ, which was in effect denied by the Arians, conducted, that bishops sought to compromise other bishops by placing prostitutes in their bedrooms at night, consecrated virgins were stripped and beaten with branches of thorn-bushes, the jails were filled, blood flowed in every city. Rome's pretension to rule the Christian world became a mockery. When Pope Julius, in the year 340, summoned the eastern bishops to Italy for a Council, he was, says Duchesne, "deeply wounded by the bitterness of the orientals and the insolent tone they had adopted towards him." [1] The orthodox minority remained in communication with the Pope, but he could do nothing against the combination of shrewd eunuchs and courtly Arian bishops who ruled the spiritual world for Constantius. One of the plagues which Constantine had suffered to develop was the power of cunning and unscrupulous eunuchs, and this would continue to be exercised in theological matters in the East for centuries. The indelicate operation was itself so lightly regarded that, Athanasius tells us, the Bishop of the great city of Antioch at this time had it performed upon himself so that he could, without scandal, sleep nightly with a consecrated virgin.[2]

Pope Julius died in 352, and a remarkable chapter in

[1] Vol. II, p. 162.
[2] *Historia Arianorum*, num. 28.

the history of the Papacy opened. Liberius, the new Pope, wrote to the Emperor, who was in Gaul, asking him to convoke a council of bishops to settle the controversy. Constantius, who had several of his suave Arian prelates with him, summoned the bishops of Gaul and induced all of them, except one, to sign some heretical formula; and, to the deep mortification of the Pope, his three representatives at the Council signed the condemnation of Athanasius the orthodox leader. When the Pope grumbled, the Emperor charged him heavily with arrogance, ambition, and boasting, and Liberius sent him a long and meek letter of apology and appeal.

The court moved to Milan, and " the eunuch, the chamberlain, and the cook " who, the Emperor Julian later said, shaped the policy of the Emperor, summoned the Italian bishops to a council. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, bitterly complains that he seduced them by " stroking their bellies instead of laying the rod upon their backs." The truth is that they wrangled in the principal church at Milan for ten days, and the eunuchs then transferred the conference to the palace and ordered them to condemn Athanasius or go into exile. Three of them went into exile.

Liberius had, naturally, not been summoned to Milan, and the Emperor sent one of his most diplomatic eunuchs, with rich presents, to Rome. Catholic historians tell the story here with pride, though what happened merely means that a Pope rose for a moment to the height of common Christian manhood and then ignominiously betrayed his office and his faith. Liberius refused the presents and had them thrown out of the church when the eunuch craftily left them before the "tomb of the apostles." This challenge to the Lord of the World, as Constantius called himself, could have but one sequel. Troops were sent to Rome and, to the amusement of the pagans, priests and monks who supported Liberius hid themselves as in the old days, and the new Supreme Pontiff was

arrested by the officers of a Christian Emperor and sent into exile in remote, half-civilized Thrace (Bulgaria).

He had been taken first to Milan, and we have the very words in which he defied Constantius. It is, of course, true that shorthand was familiar to the Romans and was used on all such occasions, but the authority for the dialogue is late and uncritical. To the pagans, who must have felt that, in Gibbon's ironic phrase, it was all a quarrel about a diphthong, the course of events was bewildering. A few of the heads of the new religion were, from their places of exile, denouncing the great majority of the bishops as well as the Emperor as doomed to something far worse than the shades of Avernus, while in the East Christian troops shed the blood of priests in the churches and thrust the nude buttocks of the Christian Vestal Virgins upon charcoal-fires. In the struggles of Arians and Athanasians and of both against the Donatist schismatics, the Circumcellions (a kind of ancient Klu Klux Klan), the Novatians, and other dissident Christians many times more martyrs were made in fifty years (330–380) than the Pagans had made in two and a half centuries.

When Liberius had been sent into exile, his clergy had met and sworn that they would elect no bishop to take his place. Their leaders were the Archdeacon Felix and a handsome and fluent deacon, of Spanish origin, named Damasus. Some months later Felix was invited to the Imperial court at Milan. The position of a deacon was not at that time the same as it is to-day. He was not necessarily a young man just preparing for promotion to the priesthood. Felix was, in fact, a man of mature years and business ability. He was persuaded to agree to the Emperor's demands, and three of the bishops of the court consecrated him Bishop of Rome, while three eunuchs stood by and represented the Roman people. The Roman community was now more acridly agitated than ever, for a large number of the priests and the women

clung to Liberius, and the men refused even to bathe in the princely public baths with their apostate fellow-Christians and reviled them in the Circus.

In the year 357 Constantius himself came to Rome: the first imperial visit the city had received since Constantine had fled in shame. If he had had any intention of enforcing his decrees against paganism he quickly abandoned it. Indeed, neither Christians nor pagans were awed by the barbaric splendour of the Emperor's jewelled chariot or the gold-tipped spears of the officers who rode before him with silk dragons, hissing in the breeze, hanging from the shafts of the spears. It was rather pagan Rome that awed the Emperor. He had in the previous year published a decree in which any who sacrificed to the gods were sentenced to death. Now he found Rome so solidly pagan in its higher class that he politely visited the temples, permitted the customary ceremonies, confirmed the privileges of the pagan priests, and, in short, behaved as the head of the State religion. Nor was he more gratified with the Christians. A deputation of rich or noble matrons waited upon him to beg the restoration of Liberius. He promised that Liberius should return; but when his heralds announced in the Circus that Rome would henceforward have two bishops, Felix and Liberius, a roar went up to the imperial box: "One God, one Christ, One Bishop." [1]

Constantius wearily left them to work out the problem. It was the Pope, not he, who had yielded. Liberius was already removed from his place of exile and was on the road to Rome. Catholic writers here strain the evidence mercilessly, in order to defend the Pope, but the more scholarly and more candid of them have accepted the plain statement of Jerome, which is supported by Hilary,

[1] Catholic historians infer from this that the immense majority of the people of Rome were now Christians. We shall find Augustine telling us the opposite even thirty years later. The Great Circus held four hundred thousand spectators, and even a fourth of these could make considerable noise.

Athanasius, and others, that Liberius " embraced the heretical perversity " in some form of other. The news about Felix had been more effective than the arguments of the Arian bishop who attended the Pope in Thrace, and he returned to Rome. The majority of the Christians welcomed him, but so large a number believed that he had purchased his liberty by yielding to the heretic that there were murderous riots even in the churches and, the *Pontifical Chronicle* says, several priests were killed. Felix had fled from Rome, but when he saw the strength of the opposition to Liberius, he returned and tried to hold a church in the old settlement across the river. He was evicted after a sanguinary struggle, and he settled in a country house on the road to the Port of Rome, where he died comfortably in his bed a few years later.

So gross is the martyr-literature which was fabricated at Rome in the next four centuries that even Felix, the traitor and Anti-Pope, was entered in the Martyrology as Saint and Martyr. The *Pontifical Chronicle*, which records how he was dislodged from Rome, then gives " Felix II Saint and Martyr," as the successor of Liberius. It was not until more than a thousand years later that the Church produced an historian, Cardinal Baronius, with sufficient knowledge and historical sense to resent the presence of this flagrant confusion in the liturgy. A solemn discussion of the matter was initiated at the Vatican, and a work written by Baronius (and never published) was compelling a recognition of the truth, when some of the clerics were " miraculously " directed to dig in the Forum, and they unearthed a sarcophagus with an inscription which told that it contained the body of Felix II " Saint and Martyr." Felix continued to wear his halo and his palm of martyrdom even in the official literature.

Constantius died in 361, and the terrible news ran through the Christian world that the Apostate Julian was Emperor. The spectacle which that world presented to him and the horrible record of his family had moved him

to embrace Greek philosophy and to restore the worship of the gods. But he did not attempt to persecute. Bishops who had destroyed pagan temples might be ordered to rebuild them, and in some places the oppressed people rose against the clergy. He also, seeing how they, like Lactantius, preferred edification to mere truth, attempted to exclude Christians from teaching. But he never visited Rome, and the Roman Church was not affected by his short spell of power. Its life passes again into complete obscurity until Liberius dies in the year 366, and it then emerges into history in a red haze of passion.

CHAPTER V

FIRST DEGRADATION OF THE PAPACY

One of Raphael's masterly frescoes in the Vatican depicts a venerable Pope rising to heaven on the clouds, to the applause of the angels, and we are told that this is St. Damasus, the greatest Pope of the fourth century. Catholic literature insists that he was worthy of the honour, but at last we have ample evidence by which we may judge the personality of a head of the Church.

The reader may have reflected that up to the present the one Pope in ten—for Damasus is nearly the fortieth of the line—who emerges sufficiently out of the mists for us to get some glimpse of his character does not make a favourable impression upon us. I repeat emphatically that this is not because I have made a selection of unflattering evidence. The simple truth is that the clearer the historical light in which we see any of these early Popes, the less attractive we find them. Victor, the first Pope about whom we know anything, is hardly an engaging personality. Upon Callistus the light is stronger and the character is worse. Cornelius is the next Pope who is not wholly obscure, and our sympathy is with the Africans who so severely condemned him. No other Pope issues from the chronic obscurity until Liberius, the Pope who bought comfort by betrayal; and then comes Damasus, of whom we have considerable knowledge.

The entry into history of this courtly and accomplished son of a Spanish-Roman priest is not auspicious. He had been one of the most enthusiastic of the clergy who had sworn to substitute no Pope for Liberius, and he was one of the first to support Felix. He transferred his support

back to Liberius when the voice of the people convinced him of his duty, and he made such progress under that Pope, especially in the favour of the richer women, that he was elected to be his successor. But the minority who had been faithful to Liberius during his exile had met simultaneously in a church across the river and had elected the deacon Ursicinus, who was at once consecrated. What active part Damasus took in the appalling fights which followed we do not know, but it is impossible to believe that they could continue for months, as they did, if the Pope attempted to check his supporters. For the events themselves we have the most positive contemporary evidence, and, since they give us our first clear knowledge of the character of the new and larger Roman Church, they must be described.[1]

When the supporters of Damasus heard of the rival conventicle across the river, they made for it and laid siege to the church. The fight lasted three days, and the shock-troops of the Damasus party consisted of gladiators, charioteers, and grave-diggers. The Prefect (Mayor) of the city led guards to the quarter, and, Ammianus says, he was driven off by the furious Christian mob. He was then persuaded to recognize Damasus, who had control of the treasury, and at length he arrested Ursicinus and seven priests who supported him. They were, however, rescued by their followers, and they took possession of a church on the Esquiline Hill in the city. They were at worship in this church a month after the election when a stronger body of supporters of Damasus laid siege to it. The assailants cut down with axes the barricaded door, while some of the party climbed to the roof, tore off the tiles, and flung them at the men and women inside.

[1] Jerome, who lived in Rome at the time or a little later, tells the story briefly in his *Chronicle* (year 369); the chief pagan writer of the time, Ammianus Marcellinus, confirms it (*Res Gestæ*, XXVII); and the most detailed account is given in a preface to a petition which was later presented to the Emperor by two priests of the party of Ursicinus (Migne's collection of the Latin Fathers, Vol. XIII).

Damasus's gladiators and racing men then fell upon their opponents with swords, axes, and staves. In short, the only conflict of evidence is whether the corpses which were strewn over the floor of the sacred edifice numbered a hundred and sixty, as the petition to the Emperors claims, or a hundred and thirty-seven, as Ammianus says. The mildest expression of a Christian historian of the time, Rufinus, is that the churches were " filled with blood." The riots were renewed in the following year; but Damasus had the ear of the authorities, and Ursicinus was expelled and forbidden ever again to approach within twenty miles of Rome.

When the statement of Ammianus Marcellinus, a retired general of literary taste and high character who then lived in Rome, is independently supported by St. Jerome, the intimate friend of Pope Damasus, it is idle to quibble about details of evidence. And both our witnesses throw further unpleasant light upon the character of the Church under Damasus.

The history of his time which Ammianus has left us is very frequently quoted as a witness to the degenerate character of the pagan Romans in the last century of their existence. The military veteran speaks with deep scorn of perfumed and silk-clad men, of vulgarly rich banquets at which " thirty secretaries " stand by the host and tell him the weight or cost of the rare fish or game, of gold-dust strewn upon the marble floors, and so on. Of the same date, however, we have the correspondence—ten books of letters—of the Prefect Symmachus with most of the leading Roman patricians, and they unmistakably reflect a world of refinement, culture, and sobriety; and this character is expressly ascribed to the nobles in the contemporary *Saturnalia* (a series of imaginary conversations of the patricians) of Macrobius. It is clear that Ammianus is describing what we should now call " the fast set," or a minority of rich idlers who copy the luxurious novelties which come through Constantinople from the East. But

Ammianus is much less frequently quoted when he tells us that the higher Christian clergy share the voluptuous life of the rich pagans. He thus explains the sordid struggle of Damasus and Ursicinus:—

> When I consider the splendour of civic life, I can understand these men, in the desire to attain their object, striving with all the strength of their party; since, could they attain their end, they might be sure of becoming rich through the presents of matrons, of driving in lofty carriages, of dressing in splendid garments, of having such sumptuous meals that their tables surpass those of princes. And yet they might esteem themselves blessed if, despising the splendours of the city under which they shelter their vices, they imitated the manner of life of some of the country bishops, since these, by their humble bearing, commend themselves to the true believer in the Eternal God as men pure and of good repute.[1]

The Papacy has acquired and will retain from this date another of its features. The bishop's house by the Asinarian Gate is now the Lateran Palace: the bishop's household is a court: the bishop's power is based largely upon gold. The Pope has become, in a nickname which Rome gave Damasus, " the Tickler of Matrons' ears."

We do not expect Jerome to say much about his friend and patron Damasus, but he extends this charge of worldliness, sensuality, and vice to nearly the whole of the clergy and the laity. Catholic writers rely chiefly upon Jerome's letters when they claim, as they invariably do, that the Romans led more virtuous lives when they passed from paganism to the Church. It does not seem to occur to the Catholic reader that it is singular that Jerome's letters have never been translated into English, though he was the finest Latin writer of his day, and the writings of all other Fathers are available in English. The reason is because, while he does tell us of about a dozen Roman ladies of virtuous, even austere life, he, in the very letters which he writes to these ladies, warns them that the

[1] *Res Gestæ*, XXVII, 3. To preclude suspicion I take the translation of this text from Gregorovius.

Roman Church, in clergy and laity, is generally and monstrously corrupt. He is frank to the point of coarseness. Indeed, Jerome, however saintly he may have been, was, for all his learning and refinement of style in writing Latin, a vulgar, fiery-tempered monk. He tells us in one of his letters (L, 4) that he and another monk with whom he argued "often spat in each other's faces." He uses language about sex to his aristocratic lady-pupils which is at times hardly fit for translation. When a Roman Christian, Jovinian, attacked the new cult of virginity, and some of the puritan group induced Jerome, who had then left Rome, to reply, his book so deeply embarrassed them that they wanted to suppress it.

I could fill this entire chapter with passages from the letters in which Jerome ferociously attacks the priests, monks, professional virgins, widows, and Christian women generally for their immorality, but I must confine myself to a few quotations. Typical is the long letter in praise of virginity to the aristocratic maid Eustochium (*Ep.* XXII). There is not a class of the Christian community which he does not warn her to avoid. Virgins "fall every day." Widows are as bad; and they use drugs and are very drunken. If you meet an ascetic-looking woman in the streets of Rome, he tells her, you say: "There goes a Manichæan"; and the Manichæans were not even Christian heretics. The young women who take private vows of chastity and live with priests or men who have taken similar vows are "a new species of concubine . . . harlots who keep to one man." The "love-feasts" or banquets in the churches in honour of the martyrs are orgies; which Ambrose and Augustine also affirm.

Eustochium must "avoid the society of matrons and not go to the houses of noble ladies." They "pass as chaste nuns, and then after a dubious supper they sleep with the apostles" (priests). She must "beware of nuns who go about in poor dress, with short hair, with long

faces." She must " beware of men [monks] who wear chains and long hair like women and go barefoot." They fast during the day and gorge at night; on feast-days " they gorge until they vomit." As to priests and deacons, they have chosen the career " so that they may see women more freely." With hair curled and scented, fine robes, and jewels on their fingers, they spend all their time visiting rich women. " When you see these people," he says, " regard them as husbands, not clerics."

That he is speaking of the clergy quite generally he makes clear again in a letter (XXIV) to another maid. She is never to be alone in a room with any priest. If she ever does find herself in such a situation—I will venture to give one mild example of Jerome's style in addressing patrician young ladies—she must " plead that either her bowels or her bladder need relieving." And to a priest of strict life whom he has discovered he gives (LII) a corresponding warning against Christian women: " Never enter the house or be in their company alone." In another letter (CXXV) he says that he hears that Roman Christians resent his charges, and he emphatically repeats them.

Another feature of the Papal Church has now appeared. It has monks and nuns. Athanasius had imported two monks from Egypt about the middle of the century, and it became a common practice for men and women to make a vow of chastity—there were as yet no rules or monastic houses—and wear a peculiar dress and fashion of hair to indicate this. It became common also, as others besides Jerome assure us, for these " spiritual sisters " and " brothers " to live in pairs and spend a good part of the day visiting the rich. St. Augustine is almost as severe as Jerome on the morals of these monks and " virgins."

Indeed, there is a law in the Theodosian Code, passed in the fourth year of the pontificate of Damasus and quoted by Cardinal Baronius in his *Annales* (370), which

sternly forbids priests or monks to seek donations in the houses of widows or orphans and declares all such donations or legacies invalid. "I do not complain of the law," says Jerome, "but of the facts which justly brought it upon us." The Pope, says the writer on Damasus in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, saw that the law was strictly observed. Not only is there no such statement about the Pope in any writer of the time, but the fact that two years later the Emperors extended the law to bishops and nuns proves that the Roman clergy shamelessly evaded it; and Jerome says that they continued to evade it by secretly securing donations. This humiliating law remained in the civil code for more than a century. It put the clergy, Jerome groaned, lower than gladiators and prostitutes, for these had the right to inherit and receive money.

The considered verdict of any impartial person after reading this undisputed evidence will be that the clergy and members of the Roman Church were corrupt to an extraordinary extent, and Catholic writers who suppress this evidence and give Jerome's dozen lady-pupils as representatives of the new Rome take dishonest advantage of the law of their Church which forbids Catholics to read critical works. We do not go to the opposite extreme and say that the dozen women and half-dozen priests whom Jerome recommends were the only virtuous Christians, or that men and women of decent life were few. But the murderous conflicts in the Churches and the very comprehensive strictures of Jerome reveal an extraordinary corruption; and just at the time when, as experts like Boissier and Sir Samuel Dill point out, Roman character had greatly improved, and the leading patricians—Symmachus, Prætextatus, Flavianus, Ammianus, etc.—and their families had the same personal ideals as we have today. The Papacy, in other words, was very diligently augmenting its own power and wealth, but that it used the power and wealth to uplift the Roman people is totally false. It is not irrelevant to add that in its new

wealth the Roman Church still failed to produce a single Christian writer of distinction. Jerome was a Dalmatian; Ambrose came from Gaul; Lactantius, Prudentius, and Augustine were, like Tertullian, Africans. The Roman Church was still destitute of inspiration or distinction.

To what extent Damasus, whose halo of sanctity is, of course, merely a relic of an age when such things were awarded almost promiscuously, shared the general degradation of the clergy it is difficult to say. Ammianus, who ought to know, plainly attributes to him, in the words I quoted, sensuality and even "vices"; and it is impossible to suppose that a bishop who let murderers fight for him week after week and allowed his clergy and people to become so gross could have been a man of high character. Many of the Italian bishops disliked him, and on one occasion they refused to attend a birthday celebration to which he invited them.

In the year 378 he was denounced to the civil authorities by a cultivated Jew, who had become a Christian, on a charge of adultery. We here again see how even the most scholarly Catholic historian manipulates the facts when he has to recount these matters. Mgr. Duchesne (II, 371) says that "we do not know of what crime Damasus was accused," and in a footnote he refers to a "legend" in the *Pontifical Chronicle* which "speaks of adultery." He ridicules this on the ground that Damasus was "nearly eighty years old." He was, in fact, seventy-three or seventy-four years old at the time of the charge, but we have no indication of the date at which the offence is supposed to have been committed. Duchesne himself points out that the Emperor Gratian recalls, in the rescript in which he acquits the Pope, that his father, Valentinian, had rescued him from a trial about the year 370. It may be a revival of the same charge.

The *Pontifical Chronicle* does not refer to a "legend" but states in its customary categorical manner that Damasus was "accused of adultery and was acquitted by

a synod of forty-four bishops "; and an official chronicler of the Papal Court would not mention so grave a reflection on the Pope unless he had something more than a legend before him. The writer on Damasus in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* says without reserve that " an accusation of adultery was laid against him"; but he adds that the charge was laid " in the imperial court " and that the Emperor acquitted the Pope. This is just as grave a falsification. Duchesne recognizes that, as we gather from the Emperor's words, the charge was made, in accordance with Roman law, in the criminal court at Rome, and he admits that we are forced to conclude that the trial " threatened to end in a condemnation when Gratian was induced to intervene." After what we have seen, it will be understood that the civic authorities had little respect for Damasus, and if he had been found guilty he would have been condemned to death. Hence the direct appeal to the Emperor. St. Ambrose, who advised him, did not love Damasus, but he had to avert a terrible scandal from the Church. And since neither the Emperor nor the synod of Italian bishops examined the evidence—the adverse witnesses included priests and deacons of the Roman Church—the acquittal is not informing. The matter is not of prime importance, but it is useful to see how the leading Catholic authorities deal with charges against the character of the Popes and preserve their " holiness."

The historical background of this episode also must be considered. After the death of the Emperor Julian and a very short-lived successor the troops had raised to the purple a truculent, indeed half-savage, officer named Valentinian to rule the western part of the Empire. Although he was a strict Christian, Valentinian was very independent of clerical dictation. It is he who declared gifts to priests and monks invalid. He refused to persecute, and he, to the anger of the bishops, passed a law of divorce when his eye fell upon a more comely lady than his very homely Empress. From him Damasus got few

favours, but in the year 375 he burst a blood-vessel in one of his hurricanes of rage.

He left the rule of the Western Empire to his son Gratian, a boy of sixteen, who was wax in the hands of the bishops. Ambrose of Milan, a civic official who had been rushed to the episcopate even before he was baptized, directed him, and often defeated the pagan counsellors who surrounded him. It was from him that the Roman Church had obtained the order to quash the criminal proceedings against the Pope. Damasus and the forty bishops who clung to him—less than half the bishops of Italy—then tried to get from the Emperor a declaration that henceforward the Bishop of Rome should not be arraigned for any cause in any other than the imperial court, and the request was refused.

Yet Damasus did secure privileges which proved of immense importance in building up the fabric of clerical power. The bishops of the synod of 378, or the Pope, wrote to remind the Emperor that his father had decreed that " the Roman bishops should have power to inquire into the conduct of the other priests of the churches, and that affairs of religion should be judged by the pontiff of religion with his colleagues." There is no trace of such a rescript of Valentinian, nor is it probable that he ever said so, but the claim seems to have been admitted. In this obscure way, under a weak and youthful Emperor, the clergy got exemption from secular jurisdiction, and the Pope got—so he thought—the power to rule the affairs of other churches. On the strength of this Damasus, acting through a synod of ninety-three Italian prelates, deposed several bishops on the pretext of heretical taint, but really because they favoured the cause of his rival Ursicinus, whose party continued to torment him. It is probably they who pressed the charge of adultery. They scorned his anathemas, and he then secured from the young Emperor the right of bishops to have their decisions enforced by the secular authority. At once he turned the

Roman " police " upon his rebels, and they were hounded from place to place and in some cases mercilessly beaten.

We shall see what ignominy their attempts to convert these imperial concessions into a power over all the Churches brought upon the Popes until the ruin of the Empire sapped the strength and destroyed the culture of all other bishoprics. Damasus tested his new strength by exacting a vague recognition of his supremacy from the Greek and Eastern Churches, and the result was humiliating. In the year 371, five years after his accession, he had received an appeal for help from Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea, one of the most respected and most accomplished Fathers of the Greek Church at that time. The Eastern Churches were once more aflame with controversy, and in a lamentable condition. The Arians had captured the Emperor Valens, and torture and exile were once more impressing an heretical stamp upon the faith for which imperial gold and coercion had won so widespread a triumph. Basil begged the Pope to send delegates to inquire into the condition of the Eastern Churches.

Another recognition of Roman supremacy, says the Catholic writer. He omits to state that Basil wrote to other Western bishops besides the Pope; just as he omits to state that when, about the same date, Spanish bishops appealed to the Pope, they appealed also to the Bishop of Milan, so as to have the support, Sulpicius Severus says, of " the two bishops who had the highest authority at that time." But joint appeals to Rome and Milan were not well received at the Lateran Palace. Milan had been, since Constantine's virtual expulsion from Rome, the seat of the imperial court, and its bishops regarded with disdain the Roman claim of either superior jurisdiction or superior character.

Moreover, the Papacy had been chilled and mortified every time it had ventured to make any reference to its pretensions in the East. At the great Council of Nicæa in 325, the first General or Œcumenical Council, the Pope's

two representatives had been lost in the crowd and had had to listen to a declaration that each metropolitan Church had authority only in its own region. When, later, Pope Julius ventured to rebuke Eastern bishops for holding a council without his permission, they sent him a letter which was, says the Greek historian Sozomen, " exquisite in the elegance of its language, composed in a vein of oratory, but full of irony and not devoid of serious threats." [1] The Roman archives have, of course, not preserved the letter, and the Catholic historian never mentions it.

So Damasus paid little attention to the appeal of Basil, and that very saintly and accomplished prelate—he had been a friend and fellow-pupil of Julian the Apostate at Athens—told the Pope some unpleasant truths about himself and his pretensions. It was, he said, apparently useless to expect Christian aid from " a proud and haughty man who sits on a lofty throne and cannot hear those who tell him the truth on the ground below." [2]

The Arian Valens died, and the Eastern bishops, meeting to appease the distracted Church in the Council of Constantinople (381), renewed the canon of the Council of Nicæa which gave the Bishop of Constantinople the same power in the East as the Bishop of Rome had in the West. Damasus summoned his Italian bishops and in their name requested the new Emperor, Theodosius, to convoke a General Council of the Church at Rome and secure the submission of the Greek Churches to the Papacy. The Pope announced this Council for the summer of 382, but instead of receiving a crowd of Eastern bishops, he got a letter in which, with suave irony, they explained that they had already met in council and settled their own affairs, and they regretted that they had not " the wings of a dove " so that they could fly from " the great city

[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 8.
[2] *Ep.* CCXX. See also *Epp.* CCXXXIX and CCLXVI for similar language.

of Constantinople to the great city of Rome." Every assertion of Papal power outside Italy met the same disdain, yet the art of apologetics is now so finely developed that the Catholic reader finds in his literature an impressive proof that the supremacy of the Popes was everywhere recognized from the middle of the second century!

In all the events I have described, Damasus, the first Pope, apart from Callistus, of whom we have extensive knowledge, presents a consistent and consistently unattractive character, and the reader will wonder what qualities or achievements Catholic writers find when they sustain the tradition of his saintliness. I turn to the article on him in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* and learn that he proceeded sternly against heretics, which is technically an excellence in a Pope; that he did much to secure the independence of the clergy and the power of the Roman See, which I have granted; and that he was particularly devoted to the memory of the martyrs and most active in the artistic enrichment of churches and church services.

To any but a Catholic it will surely seem that in inaugurating the cult of martyrs and the veneration of their remains, Damasus opened an era of gross fraud and of the exploitation of ignorant people. The Catacombs, the water-worn tunnels or galleries in the soft rocks which underlie the Roman district and were used for the burial of Christians and for the meetings of the loyal few in time of persecution, had been neglected since the erection and adornment of the new churches. Damasus had them drained and repaired, and he wrote inscriptions in verse for the tombs of the "martyrs." Duchesne, regarding the art of the inscriptions, says: "Never have worse verses been transcribed so exquisitely"; and he admits that the historical value of the Pope's verses is even lower than the poetic.

The truth is that, as the Catholic experts on martyrs tell us, Damasus was one of the most industrious forgers of martyr-stories. It is true that a vast amount of legend

already existed in the Church, but this mainly referred to martyrs in the East, and it was Damasus who began that fabrication of Roman martyrs which would, in the coming age of ignorance, run into the wildest extravagance and flood Europe with spurious relics of them. Damasus did not, it is true, permit the opening of the graves and dismemberment of the bodies of his " martyrs," but the traffic began at this time. Bloody cloths, dipped at the time of the martyrdom, it was said, held the faithful in awe. Bits of the " true cross " were already in circulation, and in the East " miraculous dreams " were leading to the discovery of tombs of the apostles, from Job to Stephen. Critics were not wanting in Rome—even Augustine in his early Christian years denounced this " cult of dead men "—but the Pope, we saw, now commanded the service of the police in silencing critics.

At this time also began the veneration of pictures and statues of the saints and of Mary. As long as the temples were filled with statues of the gods and the people had joyful and indelicate festivals of the goddesses, sincere Christians watched this development with grave anxiety, but the frescoes with which the Pope had the new churches decorated promoted it. The cult of Mary was more stubbornly resisted. St. Augustine never favoured it. He naturally speaks with respect of Mary in his works, but he is temperate, and he never recommended praying to her or worship (in the Catholic sense) of her.[1]

The cult of Mary did not, in fact, begin at Rome. We find the first trace of it in Arabia, though it is said to have been imported from Asia Minor, the home of the love-goddess. On a certain annual festival the women baked small cakes in honour of Mary, and the name they gave

[1] When, later, the clergy felt that the silence of Augustine was awkward, they forged a number of sermons in his name urging the cult of Mary. A very popular work by a saint, called *The Glories of Mary*, freely draws upon these forgeries, and one of them is still used in the official Breviary on the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin.

them betrays that the cakes had formerly been eaten in honour of Ceres. The bishops denounced the practice on the ground that Mary was a human being and must not receive these honours, but the increasing cult of virginity and the development of the controversy about Christ encouraged the worship of Mary. That it developed in Rome under Damasus we know from the fact that Jerome wrote against Roman " heretics " who attacked the innovation and denied the virginity of Mary. But when Damasus died, in 384, Jerome's enemies, Christian and pagan—in that year one of his aristocratic pupils died of her austerities—drove him from Rome, and it was not until paganism was suppressed that Mary was decked in all the robes and flowery epithets of Isis and Cybele, Ceres and Ishtar.

CHAPTER VI

THE POPES BEGIN TO PERSECUTE

ONE of the leading professors of moral theology in America, Mgr. Ryan, explains—to Catholics—why his Church can claim in Protestant countries those rights and liberties which its law emphatically refuses to Protestants in Catholic lands. "Error," he blandly says, "has not the same rights as truth." On this parody of a moral principle, the thin cloak of the economic interest of a clerical corporation, the Church has proceeded ever since it obtained power.

The genuine motive of its policy of persecution will now be clear to the reader. During the two and a half centuries which elapsed between the Neronian Persecution and the Edict of Toleration the Church had made little progress at Rome. The city must still have had a population of at least three quarters of a million at the beginning of the fourth century, yet the Church had only between twenty and thirty thousand members; and the general apostasy of these when the persecution began shows how few of them had been deeply and sincerely converted to the faith. The Catholic writer explains this, within his own sheltered enclosure, by saying that the Roman Church had been periodically decimated by savage persecution, and that during still longer periods it had been compelled to shun the light. This statement is, we saw, based upon mounds of fiction. The historical truth is that during more than two hundred out of the two hundred and forty-five years (A.D. 68–313) the Church enjoyed a genial toleration; and that few were put to death at Rome during the years when the decrees were enforced.

The apologist proceeds to explain to his readers that after the opening of the era of toleration, when the Church was enabled to build and adorn churches in the city, the Romans entered it in vast numbers, and coercion was in the end required only to break the stubbornness of a blindly prejudiced minority who disturbed the social harmony. Apart from the fact that Constantine's gold and favour now weighted the scales, there is here a very superficial misconception of the life of the Roman Church. The popular apologists imagine its position in Rome as similar to its position in London or New York today. They fancy that there were a hundred zealous preachers attracting inquirers by means of ingenious or eloquent sermons.

They would find on investigation that, while we have many sermons, taken down by shorthand writers, of Ambrose of Milan or Augustine of Hippo, we have no Roman sermons until the second half of the fifth century. It seems a singular piece of negligence in a city where the ancient system of shorthand was most cultivated and the wealth of the churches was greatest. In point of fact, the bishops of other Churches complain that Rome shirked this elementary Christian duty. It relied, we saw, upon a swarm of perfumed priests, parasitic monks, and hypocritical " virgins " assiduously cultivating the houses of rich and stupid women. Valentinian's contemptuous law against them proves that unpleasant truth. But I need recall here only three facts which show that, in spite of imperial favour and every other advantage, in spite of the levity or scepticism with which the old gods and goddesses were generally regarded, the majority of the Romans refused to be attracted and had to be coerced.

The first is the visit of the Emperor Constantius to Rome in the year 357, to which I have referred. In the previous year he had decreed sentence of death against any, in East or West, who practised the pagan religion.

Instead of insisting that the civic officials of Rome should enforce even the lighter of his decrees, he found himself compelled to play his part as head of the State religion. He confirmed the privileges of the pagan priests and the Vestal Virgins, courteously visited the temples with the pagan officials, and made no effort even to forbid the sacrifices to the gods. The processions through the streets, one of the most colourful features of Roman life, were entirely pagan, and often, on Christian principles, indecent. The deliberations of the Senate, which he attended, opened with the burning of incense to Jupiter on the small and elegant Altar of Victory.

A quarter of a century later, in the year 384, Augustine, who was not yet a Christian, spent some months in Rome. He describes his experience in his *Confessions*.[1] He found that " nearly the whole of the nobles " were pagans; and by nobles he means not merely the wealthier patricians, but the whole official and cultivated class. The extant letters of the Prefect Symmachus and his friends and the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius fully confirm this; while Jerome gives the name of only one man of the patrician class who was a Christian. They were in large part open-minded and thoughtful men, believing—as we found Ammianus saying—that there was one " Eternal God " behind the imagery of the popular religions; but, while some of them patronized Mithraism and other foreign cults, they kept aloof from the churches. As to the mass of the people, Augustine plainly conveys that the great majority were still pagan. He describes how they lined the streets, as they had always done, during the picturesque processions of the emasculated priests of the Mother of the Gods.

The next episode was in the year 392. A new type of Christian Emperor, a strong, truculent, and superstitious soldier, Theodosius, was now upon the throne at Constantinople, and was virtual master also of the West.

[1] VIII, 2.

He was a recent convert and docile to the bishops, and by a horrible crime into which his temper had betrayed him he had strengthened their power over him. He had had a vast crowd of citizens, mostly Christians and variously estimated at from seven thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand in number, treacherously and horribly massacred at Thessalonica for some affront to his dignity. In this man the bishops had found, we shall see, an instrument for the enforcement of the persecuting decrees, and the suppression of paganism had begun at Rome. Theodosius left this task to his young colleague, the Emperor of the West, while he returned to the ignoble luxury in which he spent his later manhood at Constantinople.

In the following year, 392, the youthful Emperor Valentinian II was murdered by the military commanders, and they offered the purple to a cultivated Roman named Eugenius. This man had conformed outwardly to Christian requirements, but he and his chief supporters had been secret pagans, and they declared the practice of the old religion once more free. The altar of sacrifice was restored in the Senate, and the fumes of incense rose once more to the roofs of the marble temples. The revival of paganism was clearly greeted with enthusiasm by the educated Romans, but the scanty accounts of the time do not enable us to judge in what proportion the people supported them. We do find that the stalwart Ambrose had to temporize while frantic efforts were made to drag Theodosius from his silk couch and his opulent banquets in the East. The Bishop of Milan adroitly evaded an interview with the new pagan Emperor, but in his letters he addresses him most courteously as " Thy Clemency." However, the relentless pressure of his pretty young Empress, sister of the murdered Valentinian, succeeded, when the appeals of the bishops failed, in dislodging Theodosius from his sybaritic retreat, and he destroyed the last strength of Roman paganism.

There were later incidents, but these events will suffice

to prove that the cultivated Romans—it is necessary to use this word since every Roman was " educated " in the sense of having received a free elementary education—disdained the Roman Church to the end, or until, only sixteen years after the defeat of Eugenius, the Goths made a ruin of their caste; although we shall find cultivated pagans in high office at Rome as late as the end of the fifth century. What we have seen about the state of the Roman Church in the fourth century and shall presently find persisting in the fifth century dispenses us from examining their reluctance. As to the frivolous mass of the citizens of Rome, to whom religion was not a matter of belief, the evidence shows that the majority were still pagans in 384, seventy years after Constantine had begun to undermine their allegiance to the old gods, but just at that time a humane persecution of paganism began in Rome, and the transfer of allegiance proceeded on a larger scale.

What happened in the eastern half of the Empire does not concern us here, but it is necessary to sketch the development of the programme of persecution which was initiated there. The Church had from the first made more progress in the East than in the West, for, however high we may set Athens above Rome, the Greeks had never given their people such education and social service as the Romans gave. Now that the East had a strictly Christian metropolis, Constantinople, coercion was easier than in the West, and the bishops who ruled Constantius, the son of Constantine, persuaded him at once to embark upon it.

The very first decree was tainted by the unhealthy spirit in which the evil policy was conceived. In the Theodosian Code it is dated 341, when it was in fact issued, but it purports to have been written by Constantine, who had died four years earlier. The pretence that the old Emperor had in the end departed from his policy of avoiding coercion and had left this rescript for

publication is rejected by all historians. The bishops forged it and advised this stratagem. It prescribed that any who in the future ventured to sacrifice to the gods should receive " condign " punishment. Most historians regard this as a death-sentence, but the law could not be applied even in the East.

The Christian leaders continued to press. " Tear away without fear, most sacred emperors, the ornaments of the temples," the Latin Father Firmicus Maternus appeals to Constantius and his licentious brother. It was hardly forty years since Christians had held that persecution for religion could be inspired only by the devil. In a few years Constantius yielded to the pressure and issued another edict, which one may still read in the Theodosian Code :—

> It is our pleasure that the temples be closed at once in all places and towns : that access to them be forbidden to all, and thus the opportunity of transgressing be removed from wicked men. We require also that no one shall offer sacrifice. And if any do perpetrate anything of the kind, let him perish by the sword of vengeance.

In the year 356 Constantius renewed the death-sentence against any who " offered sacrifice or worshipped idols " ; and in the following year he, we saw, respectfully visited the pagan temples at Rome, permitted the sacrifices, and confirmed the privileges of the priests. In the East the decree inaugurated the destruction of temples which was to continue, with deplorable artistic results, for the next fifty years.

At the time, however, little harm was done, since, to the amusement of the pagans, those who claimed to be the genuine followers of Christ denounced the Arian Emperor and bishops as spawn of the devil and fought their adherents with fire and sword. Then occurred the reign of Julian, and the pagans recovered a good deal of the ground they had lost; and since, as we saw,

Valentinian I (364–378) refused to persecute, the policy of coercion was suspended for fifteen years. The Romans must, indeed, have reflected that this swift change from a frantic plea for toleration to a truculent assertion of intolerance was just what they might have expected from a dynasty of Oriental princes, of ignoble origin and generally of vicious life, which was now happily extinct. Even the barbarian Valentinian I, who was said to feed his pet bears on human flesh, would not consent to it. Christianity was now free to compete with other religions, and the Romans did not fear the issue.

This was the situation in the year 375. But there now set in one of those series of catastrophes, equally destructive of the Empire and its old religion, which in those days suggested to the thoughtful mind the movement of some dark power that men called Fate. Far away on the plains of Eastern Asia a great drought drove westward the devouring hordes of the Hun horsemen, and just about this time their terrifying inroad into Europe had driven the Goths and other Teutonic tribes upon the weakened barriers of the Empire. Simultaneously, the see of Milan, where the Western Emperors lived, was thrust upon an abler and more powerful man than any of the Popes, Ambrose; and in the following year, 375, Valentinian left his imperial power in Europe to a boy of sixteen, his son Gratian, and the East to a still younger son.

It was in these circumstances that coercion began in Italy. There were pagans in high office at the Milan court, and it took Ambrose several years to outstrip them in influence with the youthful Emperor. In 382 Ambrose struck. The Roman senators were accustomed to open their proceedings by burning incense on the Altar of Victory in their handsome house in the Forum. They probably expected no more of the rite than our Members of Parliament expect of the chaplain's prayer, but it was a symbol of the establishment of the old religion, and as

such it was hated by the Pope and his followers. Damasus sent word to Ambrose that the majority of the Senators were now Christians, and they regarded the altar to Jupiter as an abomination.

We have the impartial testimony of Augustine that even two years later than this "nearly the whole of the nobles" were still pagans, but Gratian was not the man to make an inquiry. At the dictation of Ambrose he ordered that the statue be removed, the revenues of the pagan temples be confiscated to the State, and the privileges of the priests be annulled. Gratian was murdered in the following year, but this only left the Empire to a boy of fourteen, Valentinian II, and the appeal of the Romans for the restoration of the symbolic statue was rejected. We still have a letter (XVII) in which Ambrose not only, and very ingenuously, begs the imperial boy "not to let anybody impose upon thy youth," but threatens him with excommunication, to say nothing of the vengeance of Theodosius, if he yields. The law stood, and paganism entered upon its last phase at Rome.[1]

This paralysis of the life of the pagan temples coincides, we saw, with the rich embellishment of the Christian churches by Damasus, the adoption of a more sensuous liturgy, the holding in the churches of hilarious love-feasts to the martyrs—Augustine tells us how Ambrose suppressed these because of their drunkenness and license—and the corruption of both clergy and laity. The older pagan leaders also were dying out, and the younger men were absorbed in defending the broken

[1] My inference from Augustine's words that the bulk of the people at Rome were still pagan is strongly, if not decisively, confirmed by a sermon which St. John Chrysostom preached in Antioch, of which he was bishop, in 385. Antioch had a population of at least five hundred thousand and was more Christian than Rome, yet the great preacher says that only one hundred thousand are Christians, and that these are so vicious in life—in all his sermons he complains that they deride the Christian law of chastity—that he doubts if a hundred of them will be saved.

frontiers of the Empire. In the circumstances we understand that an increasing number of the pagans, who had always taken religion lightly, crossed the street from temple to church. There was, however, still such massive hostility at Rome that the bishops who surrounded the besotted Theodosius pressed for more effective coercion.

Theodosius had at first been content to decree, in 381, that no man who reverted to paganism could make a valid will. It was an astute move, since it put a man's faith in the custody of wives and daughters whose inheritance was in danger; though the fact that the law had later to be renewed suggests that large numbers were in fact returning to the temples. In 386 the Emperor was induced to enforce the laws of Constantius and order that all the temples must be closed or destroyed. The appalling wave of vandalism that then rolled over the East, reaching its height in the burning of the great library at Alexandria and the horrible murder of the last great pagan, the aged Hypatia, does not concern us here.[1]

In the West it was not the secessions from the old religion which made coercion possible, but the fact that from 375 to 392 Italy was ruled by two boy-emperors who were equally pliant to Theodosius and the bishops, and then (395–423) by the miserable Honorius, whose grade of intelligence was such that his Christian subjects said that, when he was told in 410 that " Rome had been taken," he wept, thinking that a pet hen of his which had that name had been stolen.

Six drastic rescripts of Theodosius were added to the persecuting laws of Constantius. The temples must be closed, and the death-sentence, or in minor cases confiscation, was incurred by any who practised the old

[1] All writers of the time (Malalas, etc.) who mention Hypatia tell us that she was " an old woman." It is amusing to trace to Kingsley's novel the references to her as a young maid in recent literature. As to the story that the Alexandrian Library was spared by the monks and later burned by the Arabs, it appears only three centuries after the Arab invasion of Egypt and is worthless.

religion. Honorius ordered the enforcement of these laws in Italy in 398–399. He was playing with his toys in Ravenna while the tide of barbarism was advancing upon the Empire from the north and east, and the bishops acted for him. The virtual regent and military commander, Stilicho, one of the many Teutonic warriors whom Rome had civilized, seems to have checked the application of these laws in Italy. In Africa, where Augustine had, in his failure to convert, turned to the policy of *Compelle intrare* (" Make them come in "), they were truculently applied, and the demoralization of that fertile province prepared it for the approaching conquest by the Vandals. In Italy, though the temples were neglected and sealed, there were no martyrdoms—if one can imagine a Roman dying for the outworn fable of the Olympian divinities—and the pagans remained in considerable strength until Stilicho was denounced and executed (408), and the bishops got the magistrates ordered to enforce the laws. Their final assault upon the old religion was zealously conducted while most of Italy was trodden underfoot and the Goths were starving the city of Rome into surrender.

We may seem to have lost sight of the Popes in pursuing this story of the fall of paganism, but the story is part of our plan, and after the death of Damasus the Popes sink once more into obscurity until the accession of Innocent I, an accomplished Italian of high character. Dean Milman, in his *History of Latin Christianity*, calls Innocent one of the great Popes—he might have said the first great Pope—but his entire pontificate was spent in securing or asserting the supremacy of his See, while most of the other episcopal Sees in the West were swept away in the flood of barbarism. When the Romans had themselves got rid of their last great commander, an army of two hundred thousand Goths (including their women and children) ate their way down Italy like a swarm of locusts and camped in the open country round

Rome. The city cut short the horrors of siege by paying a heavy ransom, but Alaric led his ragged army south again in 409. This time the gates were opened to him, and the trembling Romans saw those whom they had been taught to regard as savages of the northern forests wander arrogantly among the marble-lined streets and Fora.

The Gothic leader could not venture to proclaim himself Emperor. He selected the Prefect of the city, Attalus, for that honour, and it was soon seen how superficial was the Christianity of the officials. There was a final and fainter pagan revival. Pope Innocent, whether to avoid embarrassment or in real concern for the city, went to Ravenna to arrange terms with the worthless Honorius, who slunk in his palace behind the protection of the marshes of that region. The Pope remained there, however, and did not share the horrors of the year 410. Alaric deposed his puppet-emperor and proceeded to loot Rome. It is said that he ordered his troops, large numbers of whom were already Christians, having lived in the border-provinces, to spare the treasures of the chief churches and kill none who did not resist. Many legends were afterwards told in illustration of this pious restraint, but the large body of very pagan Huns in the service of Alaric, the tens of thousands of Roman slaves who joined them, and the body of the Goths who were intoxicated by their splendid opportunities, fell upon the city with the fury which has passed into a proverb. The great city was looted for three days. Noble maids, matrons, and nuns were stripped, beaten, and violated in the streets. Men collected what treasure they could and, with their families, fled to Africa, Greece, or Egypt. These scenes were repeated in all the large cities of Italy.

When Innocent returned from the safety of Ravenna, he found paganism dead, for the upper class which had clung to it was merged in a common ruin with the lower or was scattered oversea. It is a myth that the Romans of

the cities were serenely converted, and that the old faith survived only in villages (*pagi*), so that worshippers of Juno and Jupiter came to be called *pagani* or pagans. Certainly the old religion lingered finally in the villages, where rustics connected religion with the fertility of crops and cattle, but long after 410 we find Augustine in Africa contending with "pagans," as he already calls them, who are cultivated men. The writers who say that the old religion fled to the villages seem to forget that the one great Christian literary work that was produced in a thousand years, Augustine's *City of God*, was a reply to educated pagans after the fall of Rome. For our present purpose, however, it is enough that the Goths, in half-ruining Rome—there was ample treasure left to attract the Vandals later—had almost made an end of paganism.

What more concerns us is that it was in these circumstances that the Papal ambition to rule the West was more clearly formulated and, as far as Italy is concerned, more effectively asserted by Pope Innocent. The Latin style of his letters reveals the man: cultured and imperious—a real Roman turned priest. All the Churches of the West were, he says, founded by Peter and must be governed from the Lateran. There is a note of command in his letters which reveals a confidence that he will not be disobeyed. Remember the circumstances. Italy is isolated, and its cities are impoverished. In the realm of the blind the one-eyed man is King. Zosimus and Boniface, his successors, attempt the same note, but the world is comparatively calm once more, and we shall see in the next chapter how ignominiously they were repelled when they tried to address it to the bishops of other western provinces.

Here let us finish with the question of persecution. Though cultivated pagans continued to exist until the sixth century, when the Emperor Justinian closed their last refuge, the schools of Athens, we do not look for any

stories of bloodshed. These men were mostly monotheists who merely considered the myth of the Olympian family, with all its childishness and grossness, a popular apprehension of divinity that was hallowed by its long association with the greatness of Rome. This, or complete scepticism, had been the general attitude of the more thoughtful Romans since the days of Cicero and Cæsar. To the mass of the people, on the other hand, religion had been mainly a matter of ornate temples to visit occasionally—there were no services in the Christian manner—and especially of very colourful processions: on the fifty days of the games, the Floralia, the Lupercalia, the Saturnalia, and so on. The Roman Church now offered them attractive alternatives; indeed, it permitted them to go on with some of the wilder pagan festivals, such as the Lupercalia (a fertility-rite), until the end of the sixth century. We do not look for pagan martyrs.

But, while it has been advisable to show how a bloodless coercion was used in destroying paganism, the Popes proceeded to actual persecution in the case of other dissenters. The heresies and schisms which had led to appalling bloodshed in the East and in Africa—Arianism, Donatism, etc.—were never sufficiently represented in Rome to call for violent action. To suggest that the Roman bishops and clergy had a more humane temper than those of Africa and the East would be ludicrous when one recalls the events which followed the election of Damasus and, as we shall presently see, of various other Popes. There was, however, still so lively a memory of the Christian martyrs in the fourth century that most bishops must have felt it incongruous to call for the enforcement of the death-sentence against pagans while they stirred the zeal of the faithful to venerate Christians whom the pagans had put to death. Indeed, when the first case occurred, in 385, of the actual execution of dissenters—the Priscillianist heretics of Spain—by Christian authorities, St. Ambrose and other bishops indignantly

excommunicated the Spanish bishop who was chiefly responsible.

The temper of the Popes soon hardened, and by the middle of the fifth century we find them claiming and exercising that " power of the sword," the right to put heretics to death, which is still a normal and emphatic part of the Canon Law, as it is taught in the Papal university at Rome. The sternest rival of the Roman Church was what we now regard as the obscure sect of the Manichæans. Men smiled at the idea of dying for Juno and Jupiter, and the worshippers of Isis at Rome were easily persuaded to transfer their homage to Mary. A few died in the name of Mithra, but the grim earnestness of belief that would face the axe or the furnace rather than apostatize was almost confined to the Manichæans. In this sect the characteristic Persian idea that an evil spirit had created matter and all that was foul in nature, thus leaving the conception of God as an unassailably pure spirit, had been taken over from Zoroastrianism. It naturally led to extreme asceticism of life, at least in the inner circle of the " elect " or devout, and on this account it was a challenge to the generally corrupt body of the Roman Christians and drew off many of their more serious members. We saw how Jerome wrote to one of his most virtuous pupils that if you met in the streets of Rome a woman of sober dress and pale, ascetic complexion, you concluded that she was, not a Christian, but a Manichæan.

The sect survived the general dissolution of paganism. Augustine, who had joined it before he became a Christian, fought it with great zeal until the end of his life, and wrote so much against it that we must suppose that, when Italy was disorganized after 410, while Africa remained for a time untrodden by the barbarians, the Manichæans were very numerous in that province. They appear at Rome during the pontificate of Leo I (440–461), and they give occasion to that imperious bishop to open Rome's long record of torturing and slaying

its rebels. Probably the conquest of Africa by the Vandals had driven them to Italy.

Leo I is in the line of strong Popes which leads from Innocent I in the fifth century to Innocent III in the thirteenth: with whom, indeed, it may almost be said to expire. He had an all-pervading sense of the power of the Bishop of Rome, and how he asserted it and was rebuffed we shall see in the next chapter. Paganism was virtually dead when he acceded in 440, but Manichæans were numerous in Rome, and they held just such secret services as the Christians had held two centuries earlier. The parallel was complete when the Pope set the Roman police to search for and arrest them. In the year 444 Leo brought the Manichæan bishop and his clergy to trial and confronted them with confessions which had been secured by torture. The chief point in the indictment was a ludicrous story that they mixed the sacrament with semen, solemnly using a little girl of ten at the altar for the purpose. Augustine persecuted the Manichæans in Africa on the same ground, though he admitted that during his own experience as a Manichæan he had neither seen nor heard of any obscenity. The Manichæans were banished from Rome and all the cities of Italy, and it was decreed illegal for them to make wills or receive bequests. Their ideas were driven underground, to emerge repeatedly in the course of succeeding centuries and at length to find a large embodiment in the heresy of the Albigensians.

A few years later the Spanish bishops again executed Priscillianists, whose ideas were allied to those of the Manichæans. In writing (*Ep.* XV) to praise the Bishop of Astorga for his action, Leo explicitly stated for the first time the Papal policy of lethal persecution:—

> Although ecclesiastical mildness shrinks from blood-punishment, yet it is aided by the severe decrees of Christian princes, since they who fear corporal suffering will have recourse to spiritual remedies.

In the same miserable vein he wrote to bishops (*Epp.* XVI, XVII, and XIX) wherever Manichæans were discovered. It was such zealous and sincere Popes as Leo who invaded the most sacred human rights and forged the weapon with which the Papacy would in the next twelve centuries torture and slay some millions of honest opponents of its creed or policy. The Catholic writer who tells his readers that the critic of the Papacy, whom he forbids his readers to consult, confines himself to describing the vices of " a few bad Popes " is very far from the truth.

CHAPTER VII

AUGUSTINE SCORNS THE PAPAL CLAIMS

THE aim of this First Book of the history of the Popes is to make clear to the reader how the Bishop of Rome, whom we found in the first century hardly distinguishable from the brothers and sisters who have appointed him overseer (*episkopos*) or chairman of their modest group, becomes in four centuries the autocrat of Christian Europe. The shadow-Popes are replaced by a succession of wealthy, arrogant, power-conscious men who, from a superb palace by the Asinarian Gate of the city, discharge anathemas upon their rebels, armed mobs upon their rivals, and sentences of death upon all who will not bow to their authority. The bleak, deserted wine-shop in the Vatican Field in which the simple prayer-meetings were first held has given place in three centuries to a score of finely-decorated churches in which a severely graduated body of clergy, theatrically clad and severed by a stern sanctuary-line from common folk, perform, amid clouds of incense and in a blaze of lamps and candles, strange new ceremonies which would have made the shades of the early Popes, if there were any shades, shudder. Every appanage of paganism, even to the altars and statues of Jupiter and Ceres, has been appropriated.

We saw that this triumph, which is almost without precedent in the history of religion, was due neither to an entirely innocent human development, as some now say, nor to the divine guidance and aid which Catholics claim. The humane or "psychological" historians of our spineless age, who prefer pleasant assumptions to unpleasant facts, may be reminded that the only Popes

whom we clearly recognize as creators of this new Papacy down to the end of the fourth century are the ambitious Victor, the crafty Callistus, and the versatile Damasus. It was inevitable that organization should be developed in the growing Church; it was almost inevitable that this should take the shape of an exaltation of the clergy. We saw, however, that this natural tendency was skilfully directed by the few Popes of strong personality, and that after the third century political and economic conditions gave a superb opportunity to their ambition. Political changes gave them wealth, prestige, the resources for an artistic transformation of the churches and services. The political accident of a series of boy-emperors in the West then gave them the power they coveted to enfeeble rival religious bodies; and at last a politico-economic revolution, the first devastation of the Empire by the barbarians, destroyed the wealth and culture which had been the core of the opposition to them.

But the Bishop of Rome was still *a* Pope, not *the* Pope, and we have now to see how his ambition to rule the entire Christian body was attained in the western half of the old Empire. The relations of the Papacy with the Eastern Churches we will leave to a later chapter. The historian or essayist who in our time persuades himself that it is safe and just to consult Catholic authorities on these matters may be recommended to read the article " Pope " in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*. In this pretentious rival to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in its earlier editions—the last edition has been " revised " by Catholics—the American Catholic Church professes to give us, from the pens of the leading Catholic scholars of America and Europe, " the whole truth without prejudice," and as this truth is learned by " the most recent and acknowledged scientific methods." [1] The article on the Popes,

[1] In my popular small work, *The Popes and their Church* (1924, Watts & Co.), I have exposed the monstrously inaccurate character of the articles in this Encyclopædia. See, especially, pp. 100–113.

which ought to be one of the most careful in the Encyclopædia, is written by the English Jesuit Father Joyce, and on the question of Roman supremacy in early times, on which innumerable works have been written, he placidly says :—

> History bears complete testimony that from the very earliest times the Roman See has ever claimed the supreme leadership, and that that leadership has been freely acknowledged by the universal Church.

The second part of that sentence is the exact reverse of the truth. The historian must substitute " rejected " for " acknowledged." Such are the Catholic writers who are now recommended to the public in the Press and are invited to use our national machinery of broadcasting while their critics are suppressed.

We have in the preceding chapters considered every occasion down to the year 400 in which a Pope claimed " leadership " over other Churches, and I showed by direct quotation from the Migne or Benedictine collection of the works and letters of the Latin and Greek Fathers that *on every single such occasion* the Pope's claim was not merely rejected but treated as an insolent novelty. From the time of Pope Victor onward, we found, every branch of the Church peremptorily refused the Roman claim of dictatorship. We heard the most saintly of the Fathers—Tertullian, Cyprian, and Basil—using far from saintly language about it. From the beginning of the fourth century the Papacy was granted the same sort of leadership in Italy as the Sees of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria were granted in their respective regions; but even this was checked when the imperial court was established at Milan. Appeals were now made to " the *two* bishops who govern the Church " (in the West), and Damasus never ventured to assert any leadership over Ambrose of Milan; while the Eastern bishops, we saw, replied with " exquisite irony " to the Pope's feeblest attempts to dictate to them. We shall see that this was

the invariable response to the Roman claim until the economic catastrophe and the rapidly increasing ignorance of Europe—to say nothing of new Roman forgeries—left the Roman bishopric outstanding in a field of ruins.

Cyprian, the most resolute and most sarcastic opponent of the Roman claim in the third century, is uniformly described in Catholic literature as one who docilely accepted it. The only important incident in this connection during the fourth century is the correspondence with Basil, who was no less sarcastic. In the fifth century we have the greatest of the Latin Fathers, Augustine of Hippo, confronting Popes who have now, we saw, fully developed the ambition to rule the world. And in almost all Catholic literature Augustine is represented as accepting the Roman supremacy. The echo of words which he is alleged to have used in closing a famous controversy, " Rome has spoken—the case is settled," still rolls through the Catholic world. He never used those words. He was as stern an opponent of the Papal claim as Basil and Cyprian.

Innocent I was, we saw, the first Pope who clearly conceived, and probably based upon sincere religious grounds, the pontifical authority of his See. But his rule falls in the period of confusion in Italy, and he gave no opportunity for a serious test of his claim to govern all the Churches of the West. It was in the last year of his life (417) that the events occurred which are fraudulently misrepresented in the words attributed to Augustine, " Rome has spoken."

The truth is that Rome had harboured, and many of its clergy had encouraged, a man in whose teaching Augustine detected a deadly heresy. Pelagius, the " big fat dog from Albion " as Jerome rudely called him, was, apparently, a British monk living in Rome in the first decade of the fifth century who won general admiration by the austerity of his life and the erudition of his writings. Certainly Pope Innocent did not scent any heresy in his

subtle arguments about grace and free-will and original sin. He joined the stream of refugees to Africa, where his ideas were widely accepted, and went on to the East.

In 416 Augustine had two synods convoked in Africa to condemn Pelagius and his disciples, and he forwarded this condemnation to Rome with a request that " the authority of the Apostolic See be *added* to our modest statutes." In one letter he expressly says that he appeals to Rome because " there are many at Rome who favour Pelagius." Innocent gladly seized the opportunity to play the oracle. He condemned Pelagius, and, while his letters very plainly show that an appeal from Africa is to him a most pleasant surprise, he speaks of such appeals as in accordance with ancient custom. It is in a sermon (No. 131) which Augustine preached after the arrival of the Pope's letters that he used the words which are so persistently misquoted. What he said, literally translated, was:—

> Already the decisions of two [African] councils have been sent to the Apostolic See, and the reply has come to us. The case is finished.

The decisive factor is clearly the agreement of Africa and Rome.

But the sequel in ecclesiastical history puts in a still worse light this Catholic practice of misrepresenting the meaning of Augustine. Innocent died soon after he had condemned Pelagius, and he was succeeded by a Greek priest named Zosimus, who had been a supporter of the heretic. The Pelagians appealed to him, and, at the very time when Augustine was delivering his sermon, a vessel was bringing to Africa a letter (*Ep.* II) in which Zosimus declared that the case against the disciples of Pelagius was not proved and admonished the Africans to avoid " these ensnaring questions and foolish quarrels." This was immediately followed by another letter (*Ep.* III) in which the Pope pompously explained that he had now examined the case against Pelagius and had found him

" a good Catholic " and a man of " unquestionable faith." [1]

Duchesne, the only Catholic historian who is even moderately candid about these events, observes that the reply of the African bishops to Zosimus " has not been preserved ": like that other reply, of " exquisite irony," which the Greeks had sent. But Duchesne surely knew that the contemporary Christian writer, Prosper, tells us that a synod of two hundred and fourteen bishops, led by Augustine, informed the Pope that they had " decreed " that the condemnation of the heretics by Pope Innocent should stand.[2] Moreover, Prosper says, the African bishops denounced the Pope to the Emperor, and he warned the Prefect of Rome that " heresy was rampant in the city." Whereupon Zosimus wrote hastily to Africa that he had been misunderstood. He had reserved his decision, and presently he announced that he found that Pelagius and his followers were heretics. He was doubtless assisted in his decision by the fact that the Emperor had in the meantime pronounced a sentence of confiscation and banishment against all who followed Pelagius. With great zeal the Pope now set the secular forces in motion and suppressed the very widespread heresy.

Pope Zosimus is the next Pope after Damasus to stand out as a definite personality—much more definite than Innocent I—in the line of the Papal succession, and he has not a more attractive character than Damasus. Even Duchesne, who rarely mentions the Roman See between Damasus and Zosimus, can hardly record any act of the latter Pope without an appreciable irony in his words. One of his first acts had been to grant special

[1] The word Catholic, which had recently come into use, was of African origin. Augustine in combating schismatics had pointed out that he had, and they had not, the support of the universal (in Greek, Catholic) Church.

[2] *Contra Collatorem*, ch. V. Bishop Hefele quotes this in his *History of the Councils*, but falsifies the words—as he often does.

privileges to the Bishop of Arles, Patroclus, in spite of the vigorous protests of the Bishops of Gaul, who pointed out that the consecration of Patroclus was invalid because a properly consecrated Bishop of the See was still alive.

Whether or no it is true that, as many believe, Patroclus had helped Zosimus to become Pope, he was sustained in office in Gaul by a very dubious power. When the Goths had retired from Rome in 410 they had taken with them a young princess, Galla Placidia, who lived amongst the barbarians for several years and married their leader. He was murdered, and her brother, the Emperor Honorius, promised her hand and wealth to a boorish commander who rescued her from the Goths. It was this picturesque couple with whom the Pope co-operated in defending Patroclus.

We shall meet the princess again, but we have first to complete the story of the Pope's relations with the African bishops. An African priest of irregular life was suspended, and, knowing the Pope's bitterness against the African bishops, he went to Rome and appealed to him. With a fatuity which can be understood only as an outcome of bad temper and arrogance, Zosimus pretended to be satisfied with the priest's avowal of innocence and sent him back in charge of a pompous Legate who demanded that he be restored to office.

The African bishops met him in council and asked upon what canonical ground the Pope based the right he claimed to override their decisions. We have, it should be noted, reached the year 418 when we find the Pope's claim of leadership thus challenged as a novelty by the two hundred bishops of the African Church, yet Father Joyce and the *Catholic Encyclopædia* tell their readers that it had been " acknowledged by the universal Church " from the earliest times. The Legate appealed to the canons of the Council of Nicæa, of which he produced copies, and Augustine had difficulty in restraining his colleagues when they consulted their own copy of the

proceedings at Nicæa and found that there were no such canons. They agreed to send to the East for an authentic copy; but they also passed a decree which ordered the excommunication of any priest who appealed from his African bishop to an authority beyond the sea.

Before the reply came from the East, Zosimus, whose two years of rule had been so infelicitous, died, and the Africans heard of scandalous scenes in Rome which confirmed their disdain. There had been an unpleasant split in the Roman clergy before Zosimus died, and the two parties proceeded to elect rival Popes, Eulalius and Boniface. Once more there were barricaded churches and armed mobs. The Prefect of Rome—we learn that he was a pagan—ordered Boniface to leave the city, but he and his supporters appealed to the Emperor at Ravenna, and their cause was espoused by the adventurous princess, Galla Placidia, who had spent several years among the Goths. Honorius, however, relegated the decision to a general council of the bishops of Italy, Gaul, and Africa, who met at Spoleto (419). Easter occurred in the meantime, and the Romans demanded a fitting prelate to preside at the ceremonies. The Emperor sent the Bishop of Spoleto, but Eulalius and his followers returned to Rome, and the sacred ceremonies were conducted in an atmosphere which was hardly fragrant with piety. The guards had to protect the officiating clergy, and the bitter wrangles and violent brawls continued for seven months.

Boniface was declared Pope, and he had at once to confront the painful situation which the dishonesty of Zosimus had created in Africa. For the Archbishop of Constantinople had gladly assured the Africans that their copy of the proceedings at Nicæa was correct. That famous General Council of East and West, which had been held in 325, had not passed the canons which the Pope's Legate had quoted in Africa. They had been passed by a synod at Sardica in 342, which the Eastern bishops had refused to attend. These had, in fact,

actually excommunicated the Pope and scorned the fifty Italian bishops who had more or less carried out his orders; though even the canons passed by these were falsified in the Roman version which the Pope's Legate produced in Africa.

Catholic historians pretend to believe that the Pope had made an honest mistake: that the canons of Sardica followed those of Nicæa in the Roman collection and had been confused with them. One could as easily imagine President Roosevelt making a serious mistake in an official document about one of the most important clauses of the American Constitution. For the question of the Pope's supremacy was now the main concern of the Papal Court—it is, of course, childish to attribute these letters and decisions to the Pope personally—and the canons of Nicæa were the most notorious obstacle to the claim.

The African bishops met the Legate once more in 419. The proceedings of such councils were at this time taken down in shorthand—one can read some in which even the heavy swear-words which heated bishops interjected are recorded—but of this council the records have "not been preserved." We have, however, the letter, and later letters, which the African bishops sent to the Pope.[1] They tell him that they have had three days of wrangling with his Legate, and they "would have been spared intolerable things which they do not care to mention" if he had not cited false canons. However, they "trust that we will not have to endure thy pompousness again." Three years after this biting rebuke to his claim Pope Boniface wrote to an Oriental bishop:—

> No one ever resisted the dignity of the Apostolic See, for its judgment cannot be called into question: no one ever rebelled against it without being judged by his own deed.

[1] In Labbé's *Collectio Conciliorum*, 419 and 424. Bishop Hefele again falsifies the text in his *History of the Councils*.

The claim of supremacy was now an obsession at Rome, while the city sank into decay, the imperial family into vice and frivolity, and the Empire into ruin.

So petty were the Popes who tried to sustain the religious arrogance of Innocent I that Boniface's successor Celestine renewed the attempt to dominate the African Church, and in the grossest circumstances. The vicious priest who had started the trouble had confessed his guilt and been forgiven, but he was again exposed by his parishioners, and once more he appealed to Rome; and Pope Celestine sent the same Legate who had deeply affronted the African bishops to order them to reinstate the priest! In the quarrel that followed the priest Apiarius broke down and again confessed his guilt, and the Pope's party had to return in anger.

The Africans did not let the matter rest there. Labbé (year 424) again gives us the text of the long letter which they sent to Celestine, and it is a scorching and contemptuous refusal of the Papal claim of leadership. The Legate Faustinus, they say, " insulted the whole assembly, pretending to assert certain privileges of the Roman Church." They remind the Pope that the genuine canons of the Council of Nicæa expressly deny him these privileges and direct that each province shall manage its own affairs. " Are there," they ironically ask, " any who can think that our God will give his inspiration of justice to some single individual and deny it to so many priests assembled in council? " The Legate Faustinus will never again be received in Africa, and they trust that the Pope will send no more representatives, " lest we should seem to introduce the empty pride of the world into the humble Church of Christ."

There were three important Churches in the West besides that of Italy: the Churches of Africa, Spain, and Gaul. The reaction of the Spanish Church to the increasing arrogance of Rome we have not to consider, for since the year 409 the Vandals and their allies had

spread over the Peninsula and, being themselves Arians as well as barbarians, had trodden out the life of the Church and destroyed the high culture and polity of Roman Spain. The reaction of the African Church we have now studied in detail; and, if any reader finds the minuteness of the study tedious, let me remind him that what I here chiefly invite him to consider is the ethic of the Catholic apologist and historian of our own time. Duchesne, it is true, wavers between ironic candour and diplomatic suppressions and attenuations of evidence. All other leading Catholic scholars of modern times manipulate the evidence I have given in such fashion that they can assure their readers that Augustine and the African Church never questioned the supremacy of the Pope.[1]

Five years after the African bishops had definitely stated their position in relation to the Papacy, the Vandal nation, led by at least twenty thousand (some say fifty thousand) fierce warriors, crossed the straits of Gibraltar and began to lay waste the African coastal provinces in which Rome had established a civilization second only to that of Rome. The white ribs of marble towns still emerge from the desert sands here and there; just as they do in the deserts of Syria and on the bleak hills of Asia Minor. The Vandals were, as I said, Arians, and it was under standards which were surmounted by copies of the Bible that they perpetrated their atrocities as far as Carthage. Indeed, their leader Genseric not only excused the appalling conduct of his soldiers by a zeal for pure Christianity, but insisted that the African Christians deserved this chastisement for their general and profound immorality. The great African Church

[1] The reader will find the most detailed account of these events in my *St. Augustine and His Age* (1902, but still in circulation), pp. 351–403. The most recent Catholic works in this field, Seppelt and Löffler's *Short History of the Popes* (1932) and Hayward's *History of the Popes* (1931), are such dull and unoriginal compilations that one wonders why they were translated into English.

collapsed. The Goths had established the spiritual supremacy of the Pope in Italy. The Vandals secured its triumph in Spain and Africa. The Franks would complete this exaltation of the Popes.

There remained the Gallic Church; and the superb monuments which survive in the South of France to-day remind us that there the Romans had created one of their fairest provinces. Though there were sheltered regions in which fragments of the Roman culture survived, Gaul had suffered even more than Italy. The Goths had settled in it; the Vandals had devastatingly crossed it to reach Spain; the terrible Huns reached it. The ancient writers assure us that after one battle of the Huns against the Goths, Franks, and Romans one hundred and sixty thousand corpses littered the plains of Châlons. The Church shared the general demoralization. The letters of Pope Leo I and a work (*De Gubernatione Dei*) written about this time by a priest of Marseilles paint in the darkest colours the morals of both the clergy and laity of Gaul.

But there were still deeply religious prelates, and it is from one of these that we learn the character of the reaction of the Church of Gaul to the Roman claim. Leo I, the Pope whom I quoted in the preceding chapter as the first to formulate the Church's right to put heretics to death, had been elected to the Papal throne in the year 440. His pontificate illustrates once more the truth which few historians and moralists care to envisage candidly: that the Popes whom the Catholic regards as great and saintly men, whose deep religious convictions, indeed, none of us question, did more harm to the interests of the race then the Popes of irregular or worldly life. In Leo the pontifical ambition rose a stage higher. He was so stern in his sacerdotal conception that he forbade the admission of slaves—at a time when the popular apologist describes the slaves as freed by the Roman Church and raised to equality—to any rank of the clergy, " on account

of the baseness of their condition." His attempts to assert his supremacy in the East we may defer to a later chapter, and be content to note here that they were just as futile as those of his predecessors. But his relations with the last great bishop of the West, before the ruin of the Empire was completed, must be considered here.

Since this bishop, Hilary of Arles, is a saint in the Roman calendar, and no one has ever dreamed of impugning either his piety or his virtue, the incident is instructive. We have already seen that the one evidence of any acceptance of the supremacy which every Pope now emphasized is that excommunicated priests and deposed bishops began to appeal to Rome against their provincial superiors; and we have seen that the Popes were so flattered by these appeals that they made no serious inquiry into the guilt of the petitioners. Hilary of Arles, which was a metropolitan (archiepiscopal) See, very properly deposed one of his bishops in 445, and the man fled to Rome. In his own letters Leo imputes such vices to the bishops, priests, and monks of Gaul that we may safely trust the judgment of Hilary. Yet the Pope, as usual, declared the bishop innocent.

Hilary went to Rome to put the facts before the Pope. What happened we learn from the Pope's own letters. In one (X, 3) he complains that Hilary addressed him in " language which no layman even should dare to use and no priest to hear " and then " fled disgracefully " from Rome. The Pope was now so ready to use " the secular arm " that Hilary was probably threatened with imprisonment. The Pope, however, wrote to Hilary's bishops releasing them from obedience to their metropolitan, and, as we learn from another of his letters (XI), he obtained from the Emperor a rescript which confirmed the power he claimed:—

> We lay down this for ever, that neither the bishops of Gaul nor those of any province shall attempt anything contrary to ancient usage, without the authority of the venerable man, the Pope of the Eternal City.

The appeal to ancient usage amuses us when we recall that, from Pope Victor in the second century to Pope Leo in the fifth, every single attempt to claim authority over Churches outside Italy had been emphatically rebuked. But Europe was rapidly passing into that long age of ignorance in which the Roman clergy would find it possible to perpetrate an amazing series of forgeries. The Popes had obliterated rival religions and heresies by getting the police put at their disposal. By this new imperial rescript they got the use of the same secular force to silence any bishop who disputed their claim. The final element in the making of the Papacy was now secured.

But this development could occur only in an age of profound demoralization, and a short account of the course of this at Rome must conclude our study of the first phase of the history of the Popes. In the new literature about Papal history, which describes itself as happily superior to the narrow-minded Protestant or Rationalist works of the last century, we read that the rise to power of the Popes at a time when the Roman Empire disintegrated was fortunate for European civilization. The Popes would prevent moral dissolution and impose a salutary discipline upon both the afflicted Romans and the barbarians who settled among them. I have known several writers of this school and read the works of a score of others, and I have never encountered one who inquired whether in point of historical fact the Popes *did* impose virtue and social discipline upon either clergy or laity. If they at least knew the character of the first half of the Middle Ages, they would reflect that Europe could not possibly have sunk lower than it did. The entire literature of the fifth and succeeding centuries reflects a general and rapidly increasing degeneration. For the new Christian provinces of Europe we have the survey made by the priest Salvianus, which gives an appalling report, but we will here confine ourselves to Rome.

Just at this juncture, when the splendour of the ancient world was sinking into the night of the Dark Age, the Roman See was occupied for twenty-one years (440–461) by the strongest and sternest Pope who had yet acceded to it, Leo I, so that the Church had every chance of exerting whatever moral and social influence it possessed. The miserable Honorius, who had played with his pets at Ravenna while blow after blow fell upon his Empire, had died in 423 and left the Empire to the boy Valentinian III, son of his adventurous sister, who rode with the cavalry when they defeated and mutilated a usurper, and her boorish husband. Honorius had left no children, and there is grave reason to accept a Roman story that in his degenerate court he had married in succession two sisters who were immature girls. However that may be, Valentinian grew up to be a prince of loose morals and entirely frivolous mind, and he moved the court to Rome. His mother, who granted every request of the Pope, is seriously charged with encouraging Valentinian in his follies so that she could hold the reins as long as possible; and in order to escape the danger of having an ambitious son-in-law she, on a religious pretext, condemned her daughter Honaria to virginity, with disastrous consequences.

Honaria was presently found to be pregnant and was imprisoned in a convent in the East, and from this the girl contrived to send a letter to the leader of the savage Huns offering him her hand and half of Italy as her dowry. In 452 Attila descended upon Italy with his vast army of Huns and Teutons, pillaged town after town with great savagery, and seemed to threaten Rome with worse ravages than ever. It may interest the reader to know that in his army was a large body of Burgundians, or ancient Teutons, whose blood had not yet the least adulteration of Latin, to say nothing of Semitic, strains. They were the most savage and perfidious of his soldiers. They massacred hostages and captives, and on one

occasion they slew two hundred maidens by setting wild horses to tear them asunder or laying them in the ruts of the road to be crushed into pulp by loaded waggons.

Pope Leo went at the head of a deputation of Romans to disarm Attila, and Catholic literature still tells how the fierce Asiatic was cowed by the venerable Pope. Indeed, the simpler-minded faithful still read how the shades of Peter and Paul stood by the Pope and overawed the barbarian. In profane history we learn that Attila had just come with his battered army from its terrible defeat at Châlons, that it was suffering heavily from disease and weariness, and Attila was too sagacious a commander to venture farther into Italy. He withdrew his troops, laden with booty and ransom, from the enervating and infectious south.

We have the sermon which Leo preached at a thanksgiving service. In it he tells the Romans that they " give more to demons than to the apostles and go in larger crowds to the games of the Circus than to the festivals of the martyrs." In the imperial circle a series of outrages soon occurred which confirm this characterization of life at Rome. Valentinian III was murdered by one of his leading officers, a rich noble, for raping his wife. The wife died soon afterwards, and even the Romans were disgusted when the noble compelled the Empress-widow to marry him and share his bed. She sent a message summoning the Vandals, who had already occupied Sicily, to come and avenge her, and they gladly complied. Leo again headed the deputation of Romans which went to intercede for the city, and it is said that he obtained a promise that none should be killed who did not resist the looters. Genseric was no Attila, and he would probably have issued that order in any case; nor was it obeyed. Vandals and slaves looted the city for fourteen days and nights. They seized the sacred vessels of nearly all the churches, stripped the palace, and tore the bronze tiles, plated with about two million pounds

worth of gold, from the roof of the great temple of Jupiter. The Empress who had summoned them was robbed of her jewels, and she and her daughters and a large company of other Romans were shipped to Africa in the Vandal fleet.

Twenty years afterwards the great city was again, and finally, sacked, the slaves and workers now joining with the barbarians in the work; and three years later the Teutonic ruler of Europe disdainfully abolished the stricken Empire. The miserable history of that quarter of a century does not concern us here. Neither Leo, whom Dean Milman calls " the only great name in the Empire," nor any of his successors had, or attempted to have, any influence upon its fortunes. They were ecclesiastical statesmen, concerned almost exclusively in every letter that has been preserved, every act of theirs which is recorded, with the assertion of their authority over other Churches and the final extinction of heresy. They succeeded. With the passing of the Empire all culture and civilization die—the next Book will amply show this—and a beggared remnant of the Roman people crawl onward into the long night.

BOOK II

THE DARK AGE

(A.D. 450–1050)

BOOK II

THE DARK AGE

(A.D. 450–1050)

On several pages I have referred to a "new history" which, from causes which I stated in the Preface, violates the soundest canons of historical science. It is hardly necessary to say that in the case of the great majority of our historical writers and teachers I suggest no more than the suppression of ugly truths; though it is obvious that any estimate of an institution or a period which is based upon incomplete statements of this kind is bound to be false. The worse evil is that a few writers of manuals for use in schools and colleges, usually men who cannot read the original Greek, Latin, and medieval documents, have found it advisable to conciliate Catholics, Roman and Anglican; and the works of these, together with the works of historical writers of astigmatic vision like Mr. Hilaire Belloc and those of Catholic literary men and women who discuss history as glibly as they discuss Relativity or Bolshevism, are recommended in four-fifths of our Press as the new history.

To the point we have reached we have not seriously encountered this kind of literature. The historical process which we have followed, the evolution of a simple and devout religious democracy into an elaborate hierarchical Church, is not clouded by controversy; nor is our attitude toward the Church of Rome to-day much affected by the question how it obtained power in the first three centuries. We do not say that the remarkable fabric which we saw it become was the outcome of priest-craft. Of the forty-four Popes who ruled the Church

down to the middle of the fifth century, forty had neither the intelligence nor the personality to plan and pursue Macchiavellian policies. What Callistus and Damasus did is not open to serious controversy; and we fully admit that in their lordly assertion of power Innocent I and Leo I were inspired by the conviction that Peter had founded their Church, and that Peter was the rock upon which the entire Christian structure must be based.

But it is a vital part of our attitude toward the Roman Church to-day that we shall know what use the Popes made of the power which an extraordinary series of historical and economic events conferred upon them. Here we at once encounter our historical sophists. It has until recent years been an unchallenged commonplace of our literature that the triumph of the Roman Church was followed by a Dark Age: a period of social and economic confusion, intellectual torpor, and moral debasement which lasted about six centuries. Now a few American professors of history have gratified Catholics by pretending to have discovered that there never was a Dark Age in Europe.[1] The procedure is either to represent that by the Dark Age we mean the whole of the Middle Ages (450–1550), which no one ever meant, or that there really was a light here and there during the Dark Age, which no one ever denied. More conscientious historians who wish to be conciliatory blame the repeated barbaric invasions of Europe and submit that the demoralization would have been worse if the strong arm of the Papacy had not exerted some control. Against all these we shall now see that the triumph of the Papacy was, in the words of Dr. Inge, " followed by several centuries of unredeemed barbarism, the most

[1] See, for instance, *Civilization during the Middle Ages* (1922), by Professor G. B. Adams of Yale; *Short History of Civilization* (1926), by Professor Lynn Thorndike of Columbia; *History of European Peoples* (1927), by Professor Clarence Perkins of Texas University, and *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (1927), by Professor Haskins of Harvard.

protracted and dismal retrogression which the human race had suffered within the historical period ": [1] that the chief efforts made during that period to save or to restore civilization were made by Teutonic monarchs; and that the Papacy sank steadily until, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, it was in a state of extraordinary degradation for more than a hundred and fifty years and had to be reformed by the " barbarians."

[1] *Christian Ethics and Modern Problems*, 1930, p. 13.

CHAPTER I

CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL OF ROME

One of the most important representatives of the new interpretation of the Dark Age, Professor G. B. Adams, says that by the fifth century "the creative power of antiquity seems to have been exhausted," and it naturally took the Popes many centuries to mould into creative shape the raw fresh energies of the barbarians. Historians may be excused for their ignorance of science—this "exhaustion" of civilized peoples is a piece of unscientific nonsense—but we may expect of them a stricter attention to facts. The truth is that the only four notable efforts that were made during the Dark Age to restore civilization were made by Teutonic peoples whose education from barbarism, in which the Papacy had no part, had taken only one hundred years or less. The Ostrogoths (Eastern Goths), who settled in Italy, rose in fifty years to a higher civilization than that of Papal Rome, and have left us almost the only fine architectural monuments of the Dark Age. The Lombards, who later settled in the old Kingdom of the Ostrogoths and were just as alienated from Rome, were stimulated by the work of their predecessors to create a very promising civilization; and for the destruction of this the Popes were mainly responsible. Charlemagne, whom the Popes used for that purpose, was nevertheless inspired by the Lombard culture to make his own abortive attempt to restore civilization in the north. The Saxons, who made the next and more fruitful attempt, were only about a century removed from their primitive barbarism. Let us add that the Normans of Sicily, who through

Frederic II played a very great part in the awakening of Italy, rose from barbarism to a high culture in two generations. All these developments were independent of, and generally hostile to, the Popes, whose city sank century after century.

Equally absurd and opposed to the facts is the familiar theory that the Roman Empire "wore itself out" by its vices and that the insistence of the Popes upon virtue and discipline saved Europe from a worse degradation. The Roman civilization was the longest-lived that had yet appeared in history. Those of Egypt, China, and India were in origin much older, but their historical record is broken up by periods of repeated and prolonged reaction which correspond to, though they were never as long as, the Dark Age of Europe. Further, vice and luxury had been far worse in the later period of the Republic, five hundred years before the fall of Rome, than they were in the fourth century of the Christian Era or the preceding three centuries. We have, moreover, the assurance of every Christian writer who shows a deep concern on this point—Cyprian, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, and Salvianus—that there was no improvement of morals among the followers of the Popes. We shall see presently that the vices we discovered in the Roman Church in the days of Damasus disclose themselves again in the sixth and later centuries and reach their grossest proportions five centuries after the Goths and Vandals had visited Rome.

The historian who disdains smooth literary phrases and arbitrary ethical assumptions is not puzzled by the fall of the Roman Empire, but, since the Popes had not the least influence upon its fortunes, we need not discuss them here. What we have to consider is whether the Popes exerted themselves to save the finer elements of the foundered State or to restore them as speedily as possible, and whether they seized the opportunity to extinguish for ever those practices which had lingered

in Roman life from the early semi-barbaric years. The modern Catholic apologist is on these points almost as reckless as those who fabricated martyr-stories in the Dark Age. With superb indifference to the most notorious historical facts he tells his Catholic readers that the Popes abolished slavery, raised the status of women, gave the Roman world schools, hospitals, and philanthropic institutions, and abolished the brutal gladiatorial combats.

Most people are under the impression that if there is at least one point in this list of services that is unchallenged it is the suppression of the gladiatorial combats. The story of the heroic monk, St. Telemachus, whose death in the arena is said to have led to the abolition of the games, is as evergreen as the myth of the Age of Chivalry; and from the historical point of view it is not worth a glance. The Roman Christians of the fifth century, who are supposed to have witnessed his heroism, knew nothing about a St. Telemachus. The legend first appears, in remote provinces of the Greek Empire, fifty years after the alleged event. The games of the amphitheatre, which were provided for the people by very wealthy men or the Emperors and might cost as much as £100,000 in three days, naturally perished when their economic roots were cut by the destruction of Roman society. The claim of a moral influence becomes amusing when we reflect that, as soon as some economic recovery began, duels, tournaments of the most bloody description, and the baiting of animals were the principal recreations of Christendom.

Hardly less blatant is the claim that the Popes suppressed slavery. No Pope ever condemned slavery. Millions of slaves were set free by the destruction of the imperial government and the ruin of the rich patricians who owned them, but every man who could afford them still had slaves. The Popes, we shall see, became the chief slave-owners in Europe. Economic changes again

led to the modification of slavery over the greater part of Europe into serfdom (if there is any material difference), but under the eyes of the Pope the Italian principalities and republics still conducted a traffic in slaves of the vilest description; and the later brutal trade in African flesh is a direct continuation of this until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Every Pope agreed with Augustine (*City of God*, XIX, 15) that slavery was in accordance with the divine will.

In regard to schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions we must discriminate. We have to-day expert historical manuals of each of these subjects, and they unanimously show the absurdity of the claim of the Catholic apologist. The Roman Empire had created a remarkable system of free elementary and secondary schools, made a very large provision of free medical service, and was, from the beginning of the second century, rich in homes for orphans, widows, and aged folk.[1] This impressive system of social service inevitably collapsed at the fall of Rome and the Empire, and Europe was so terribly impoverished for centuries that it would have been absurd to expect the Church to restore it; almost as absurd as it is for apologists to claim that the Church did in fact maintain the system of beneficence. We make full allowance for the new poverty of Europe. But we should expect any authority which had a concern for social welfare to press for the education of the people as soon, and in proportion, as new economic resources permitted. The Papacy did exactly the opposite. We shall see that by the year 600 it had acquired vast wealth, yet the Popes not only did nothing for the education of the people, but condemned bishops who attempted it. We shall further see that when Charlemagne endeavoured to found a school-system, the local representatives of the Papacy, which was hostile to him in his later years,

[1] For a summary account and authorities, see my *Social Record of Christianity* (Watts & Co., 1935).

ruined his plan. So the story runs consistently throughout the six centuries which this Book covers.

A sociologist or any sound moralist would probably say that the gravest consequence to civilization of the fall of the Roman Empire was the destruction of the system of free universal education which it had provided. One may safely say that of the fifty million citizens of the Western Empire at least ninety per cent. had been literate; and one may just as confidently say that from the year 500 to 1050 more than ninety per cent. of them were illiterate. Educationists have made a thorough research, and they declare that one can count on one's fingers the number of schools which during this period existed at any particular time in any country. This crass universal ignorance was the chief cause of the coarseness and violence which reduced Europe to barbarism; and if any reader doubts our contention that this sordid ignorance suited the interests of the Church, he will learn later how the Papacy reacted to the revival, under Arab influence, of school-life and intellectual activity. The Catholic writer who meets this grave indictment by pointing out that one abbot or bishop in tens of thousands during the Dark Age was zealous for culture has a poor idea of the intelligence of his readers.

These general reflections upon the character of the Dark Age which followed the fall of the Roman Empire will be fully vindicated if we now resume the history of the Popes after the middle of the fifth century. Hitherto we have found few Popes of a character that was plainly unfitted for the office. It is true that we know nothing in exact history about the character of nine out of ten of them, but we will take the silence of ecclesiastical history as evidence of pious mediocrity. Now men of corrupt character appear more frequently, and, to the confusion of writers who blame the barbaric invasions, we shall find them more numerous the farther we move away from

the period of those invasions. The degeneration reaches its lowest depth five centuries after the fall of Rome in a hundred years of Papal corruption which the older Catholic historians, who were at least more conscientious than those of modern times, called " The Reign of the Whores." But it begins in the sixth century. Up to the present I have been able to quote in corroboration of most of my statements the *History of the Early Church* of Mgr. Duchesne, the most scholarly Catholic historian since Lord Acton. Duchesne's ecclesiastical position compelled him—through mutual friends I often learned how uncomfortable he was—to strain the evidence in places, but when he came to add a fourth volume, *L'Église au VI^e siècle* (1925), to his work, he became so frankly ironical that English Catholics have declined to translate it, as they translated the three earlier volumes.

Of the Popes who fill the second half of the fifth century we need say only that they seem to have been harmless little men who strutted very pompously in the imperial vestments of Innocent I and Leo I. To the rapid disintegration of the Empire and its institutions they paid no attention. What chiefly concerned them was that, when Rome fell into poverty and decay, the Greek Catholics affected to regard its Church as reduced to a lower position and to claim that Constantinople was now the metropolis of the Christian religion. I propose to devote a chapter later to the development of the Schism between East and West, but the friction with the Greeks is a vital element in the disorders which now broke out in the Roman Church, and the situation must be briefly explained.

Constantine had divided the Empire into East and West and had made Constantinople a serious rival of Rome. Its bishop naturally became the equal in prestige and authority of the Pope, and every Council of Eastern bishops confirmed his position as head of the Greek half of Christendom, which may roughly be described as

stretching from the Balkans to Mesopotamia. Every effort of the Popes to attack this position was, we saw, futile, and Christianity remained a federation of Churches under two regional presidents.

When the Western Empire fell, the Archbishop of Constantinople, Acacius, began to speak of his Church as " the mother of all Christians," and he turned a disdainful ear to the protests of Pope Simplicius. But the next Pope, Felix III (483–492), was of the aggressive pontifical type. He discovered heresy in the formula which the Emperor Zeno had drafted for the purpose of ending the latest theological controversy that filled the East with disorder. The issue of a theological document from a palace which was stained every few years with murder and was the home of every sordid passion—for, though the barbarians scarcely entered it, the Greek Empire degenerated, morally and intellectually, almost as much as Europe—would seem ironic, but the formula had, of course, been drafted by Archbishop Acacius and his bishops. Pope Felix sent two bishops to Constantinople to enforce his orthodoxy, but they yielded to the cajolery and bribes of the Greeks. He then excommunicated Acacius; and a monk stole into the sanctuary and pinned the sentence upon the vestments of Acacius while he conducted a solemn ceremony. Acacius retorted by excommunicating the Pope, and for forty years the two Churches refused to correspond except in the lurid language of the book of anathemas.

Readers of Dante will remember that when the poet reached the sixth circle of hell (Canto XI, 3), where the stench was such that he had for a while to take shelter, he first encountered the pit of Pope Anastasius. We gather how little progress history had made even in the brilliant days of Dante when we notice that the poet has put *Pope* Anastasius in a deep circle of hell for a crime which was committed by the *Emperor* Anastasius; but his sentiment faithfully reflects Church tradition about

the Pope ever since his death in 498. He had been guilty of a monstrous attempt to induce the Roman clergy to forget the outdated feud with the Greeks and renew communion with them. He survived less than two years in the Papal chair, but it was enough to start in the Church a passionate struggle which recalled the days of Damasus.

It is here particularly instructive to appreciate the historical background. The Goths (Ostrogoths), instead of continuing to harass the Romans and prevent them from reconstructing their social life, had for some years settled in the north of Italy. Their King, Theodoric, made Ravenna his capital and ruled one-third of the country. This is the first of the many instances I quoted of whole nations of the barbarians being raised to the level of civilization in two generations; and without the least tuition from the Pope or his clergy, for they were Arians. Visitors to Ravenna still admire the monuments of the Gothic restoration, and there is no difference of opinion amongst historians as to the high character and splendid work of Theodoric and his accomplished daughter. I must be content here to quote the reflection of Dean Milman that " under the Ostrogothic Kingdom manners in Italy might seem to revert to the dignified austerity of the old Roman Republic." [1] Theodoric gave peace to Italy, zealously promoted education and culture, protected the Jews (whom the Pope's followers had already begun to persecute), treated the Pope and Rome with entire respect, and urged the Romans, giving them a large sum for the purpose, to preserve the noble buildings of the old Empire which they totally neglected.

In the second year of the pontificate of Anastasius the leading Roman patrician Festus, head of the Senate, went to Constantinople to confer with the Emperor and the Greeks about the means of effecting a reunion, and while he was there the Pope died (November 498).

[1] *History of Latin Christianity*, II, 364.

Cardinal Baronius sees in the premature removal of the Pope a proof that Providence watched over the Roman Church and preserved it from heresy. There are historians who suggest that Providence must have made use of poison, but what followed makes the appeal to the supernatural incongruous enough. Festus hurried back to Rome, and he and the majority of the Senate and leading men of Rome raised the Archdeacon Laurence, who favoured their policy, to the Papacy. The opposed party elected the deacon Symmachus. Each side accused the other of bribery; and we shall presently learn from a royal decree that Papal and other episcopal elections were in fact now preceded and accompanied by gross corruption of the electors. The Church was so far from having reached its medieval form that the Roman people still joined the clergy in electing the Pope. There were as yet no "cardinals" in the modern meaning of the word.

We shall presently find Symmachus, who is described as a convert from paganism, accused, and probably guilty, of immoral relations with a number of the wealthier women of the city, as well as of bribery; and our strong suspicion of his guilt is confirmed by the fact that the holiest cleric in Rome, a deacon who is reverently described by Pope Gregory I as a miracle-working saint, supported the anti-Pope Laurence all his life. Once more we find that as soon as any historical light falls upon the personality of the Pope it reveals a far from saintly character: a man like Damasus, a "tickler of matrons' ears," ready to use any weapon to secure the lucrative office. But the murderous fights between the two parties which now set in and lasted for several years, while Theodoric the Goth and his daughter looked on in amazement from peaceful Ravenna, show that the Roman Church as a body lingered at a low moral level. It would intrigue the Goth to know that Constantinople was just as red at the time with blood spilt in a sacred

quarrel. In one day more than three hundred Greeks were slaughtered in a theatre. The reader will pardon the irony when I remind him that virtually all our historians tell him that the Goths were responsible for the demoralization of Europe and the Popes were piously checking the spread of the disorder.

After much murderous fighting in the streets and looting of each other's houses both parties appealed to King Theodoric, the heretic and barbarian, to restore order in the Papal city. He decided that Symmachus must be recognized as Pope, on the ground that he had been elected first, and Laurence must be consoled with a provincial bishopric; and he then spent six months in Rome, his high and generous character making a deep impression upon all. The superb marble buildings of pagan days, which they permitted age by age to crumble with decay, renewed his hope to restore culture in Italy, and he started a fund for the preservation of the old monuments. What a contrast to the miserable generation which fought like savages amongst the gathering dust! For the passions of the supporters of Laurence were merely cloaked as long as Theodoric was present, and soon after his return to Ravenna he received a deputation from the leading Senators and the Consul which accused the Pope of adultery with a number of Roman ladies, who were prepared to testify to it, and of gross corruption in securing election. He invited the Pope to come to Ravenna, but, while Symmachus lingered on the way in Rimini, he saw a party of his opponents conducting the accusing ladies in advance of him to Ravenna. He hurried back to Rome and fortified the Vatican church and mansion. Laurence also hastened to Rome, and the historic fight began.

The contemporary Bishop of Pavia, Ennodius, a supporter of Symmachus, described the fight in a defence of the Pope which is included in the Migne collection of the Latin Fathers; though, naturally, he ascribes all the

violence to the party of the Senators and the saintly deacon. Men fought in the streets, especially round the churches, with swords, axes, cudgels, and stones. A number of priests and many of the laity were killed. They broke into each other's houses; and nuns were dragged from their monasteries, stripped, and beaten. Theodoric then sent a provincial bishop to take temporary control of the Church and inquire into the charges; and Ennodius admits that the Pope refused, when he was ordered, to submit the slaves of his household for question (most probably by torture) about the charge of adultery.

So Theodoric ordered all the bishops of Italy to meet in synod at Rome and find a solution. The Pope was summoned to the church where the synod was held, and he barely escaped with his life when his procession was stoned. Gothic soldiers from Ravenna—one would give much to know the reflections of their officers—were sent to escort him, but he now refused to present himself for examination. The bishops tried to induce the people to dismiss the charges, but they refused, and the fights continued during the five months when the bishops desperately sought a solution. In the end they, as Duchesne, who clearly believes the Pope guilty, says, "refer to God's tribunal the task of judging whether the charges brought against the Pope are sound or not." They ordered the people and clergy to submit to Symmachus, but they had not declared the Pope innocent and the followers of Laurence continued to hold all the churches except St. Peter's. The feud lasted ten further years, or until the death of Symmachus.

Hormisdas, who succeeded him, remains, like most of the early Popes, obscure in personal character, but he entered upon a diplomatic policy, in the interest of the Papal ambition, which frustrated the hope of a restoration of civilization in Italy. Ravenna was now a city of considerable promise in art and culture and far superior in moral tone to Rome and Constantinople, and the co-

operation of the Papacy with the Goths might have had historic consequences. To this prospect of moral and social recovery the Pope was blind. From his pontifical point of view it was desirable to get the Greek bishops compelled to recognize his authority and then to help the Greek Emperor to extend his corrupt rule over Italy. His chance seemed to come when the Emperor Anastasius sent a friendly message to him, and Hormisdas, knowing that the Emperor was hard pressed, sent four bishops to Constantinople to exact the submission of the Greek Church.

The gorgeous Blachernae palace at Constantinople, more richly decorated than any that was ever built by a Roman Emperor, had for fifty years witnessed the most sordid scenes of passion and bloodshed. The throne was at this date occupied by a quaint type of Emperor, Anastasius, an heretical lay-preacher (hence confused by Dante with Pope Anastasius) who became a military officer and was then chosen by the vigorous Empress to be her partner. Fierce rivals threatened him, and the people rose against him when he tried to reform their morals and to suppress the combats of wild beasts in the arena, which still continued in the sixth century. He recovered his power, however, and the Pope's demands were spurned; but Anastasius died in 518, and a still quainter type of Emperor, a boorish peasant who had won a high military command, bribed his way to the throne. This Emperor, Justin, had an ambitious nephew, Justinian, and able officers, and, after pacifying the Empire, they looked with covetous eyes toward Italy. They readily healed the schism of the Churches by sacrificing the memory of Acacius, the Bishop of Constantinople who had excommunicated the Pope, and granting all the Pope's demands except the actual submission of the Greek Church to his authority.

The price the Pope had to pay was that the Romans should conspire with the Greeks to ruin Theodoric the

Goth; and Theodoric, who was now advanced in years and had only a daughter and a young grandson to succeed him, watched the intrigue with deep concern. The one stain which some historians find on Theodoric's career is that near the end of his life he had the philosopher Boetius and other Romans executed for taking part in the conspiracy, but even the Quaker-historian Hodgkin, the highest authority on Theodoric, finds that they were guilty. Hormisdas had died meantime, and John I had succeeded him. Theodoric, now a worn and irritable man, summoned him to Ravenna and ordered him to go to Constantinople and induce the Greeks to cease persecuting the Arians in that city. John had a magnificent reception in the East, and we can hardly be surprised that he made a feeble plea for the heretics. When he returned to Ravenna he was imprisoned, and he died in prison in a few days. Theodoric died three months later and left his gifted daughter Amalasuntha, the ablest and most cultivated woman of her age, to guard the kingdom for her son, curb the unruly Gothic troops, and face the ambition of the powerful Greek Empire.

The immediate successor of John I, Pope Felix IV, seems to have been a quiet and pious man whose election had been secured by Theodoric before he died. In four years, however, the See was again vacant, and, since the Goth ruled the city no longer, there was again a double election, and the murderous fights of the two parties lasted nearly a month. The successful claimant, Boniface II, a man of Gothic extraction, tried to suppress the practice of bribery by decreeing that henceforward the Pope would nominate his successor. There was so loud and general an outcry that he was compelled to rescind his decree in public, and his rule lasted only two years. At his death the Senate passed a severe law against bribery at the Papal election, and a rescript was issued from Ravenna in the name of the young king in which we still read how gross the corruption had become. Even

the sacred vessels of the altars were sold or pledged to bribe supporters, and the funds from which the poor were assisted were shamelessly alienated.[1] The Goths were endeavouring to save the Papacy from the debasement which steadily lowered its character; yet there are probably few colleges to-day in which students are not taught that these barbarians were responsible for the debasement, and the Popes strove to check it.

The irony increases when the Greeks or Byzantinians, as they begin to be called, replace the Goths in the control of the Papacy. Amalasuntha, who sought to restore civilization, was betrayed and murdered, and her vicious husband and feeble son promised a poor resistance to the new Greek Emperor Justinian. He has, like Constantine, been entitled "the Great," and he had no more right to the title than Constantine. But he had able generals, astute diplomatists, and eminent jurists who compiled the code of laws which bears his name. His armies wrested Africa and Sicily from the Vandals, who, being Arians, were allies of the Goths, and his diplomatists then prepared the way for the conquest of Italy by securing the co-operation of the Papacy. A most impressive deputation came to Rome to confer with Pope John II (532–535) on religious questions—it was said—and enrich the Roman churches from the gold and treasure which still abounded in the East; and from all parts of Southern Italy lay and clerical assurances of homage were sent to Justinian. The next Pope—there were ten in forty years—Agapetus, son of a priest, was an old man of strong religious feeling, and the Goths, threatening severe reprisals on Rome, compelled him to go to Constantinople to disarm the Greeks. It happened that the See of that city was vacant, and the Pope engaged in a violent quarrel to prove that the candidate whom the Empress favoured was a heretic. He died in the course of the quarrel, and the Romans

[1] The rescript is published in Mansi's collection, year 532.

elected Silverius, a son of Pope Hormisdas, to succeed him. They were now to learn who were the real barbarians.

Theodoric the Goth, who ruled a third of Italy for thirty years and maintained the most peaceful and respectful relations with the Papacy, was so little removed from barbarism in his boyhood that he never succeeded in learning to write his own name; yet all historians, and even contemporary writers, admit that he was a great restorer of civilization. The thirty years of his reign were, says his Quaker biographer Hodgkin, " a time of unexampled happiness in Italy." He " cherished civilization with a love and devotion almost equal to that which religious zeal kindles in the hearts of its surrendered votaries." Procopius, a high official of the Byzantine court, which hated him, and one of the chief writers of the time, says that " he was an extraordinary lover of justice." His daughter, who spoke and wrote Greek as well as Latin, inherited his ideals and his ability. Indeed, it was in large part her zeal for education and culture which enabled her enemies to turn the Gothic soldiers, who still distrusted them, against her. The Popes conspired with the Greeks to destroy this one fine constructive agency in the life of Europe, yet they must have known well the character of the Greek rulers, clergy, and people. We have now to see that the alliance brought upon the Papacy, in its frenzied hope of securing ecclesiastical supremacy at any cost, the worst degradation that it had yet endured.

CHAPTER II

THE FINAL QUARREL WITH THE GREEKS

At the time when, in the year 536, Silverius became Pope, Belisarius, the ablest military commander of the age, had led his victorious Greek troops to within fifty miles of Rome. The Pope sent him a formal invitation to advance and deliver Rome from "the yoke of the barbarian," and before the end of the year the Greeks entered Rome by the Asinarian Gate, close to the Lateran Palace, and sent the key of the city to Constantinople.

It was near Christmas, and the festival was boisterously celebrated. But the entire Gothic nation was now in arms, and in the following year they besieged Rome. Such were the horrors of the siege that many Romans pressed the Greeks to leave, and one day Pope Silverius was summoned to the palace of Belisarius on the Pincian Hill, the seat of the old Roman patricians. Belisarius sat at the feet of his beautiful wife, Antonina, who reclined on a royal couch, and the Pope, ominously deprived of his suite of priests, was ordered to stand before her. She coldly accused him of treacherous correspondence with the besieging Goths, produced documentary proofs, and ordered him to be dragged ignominiously from the palace and sent into exile. Some writers of the time say that he was first, in her presence, stripped of his pontifical robes and dressed as a monk. It seems that he made his way to Constantinople and induced the Emperor to send him back under guard, but he was seized on the way and exiled to a bleak and miserable island, where he died a few years later.

Behind this extraordinary and sacrilegious humiliation

of the Papacy as soon as it was " delivered from the yoke of the barbarians " is a sordid story which must interest every man who would learn the truth about the relation of the degradation of the Papacy to the Teutonic invaders. On an earlier page I told how Pope Agapetus was sent to Constantinople by the Goths to protest against the persecution of Arians, and how he turned aside to involve himself in a quarrel about the election of a new bishop of that city. The Empress Theodora had insisted upon the election of a certain Anthimus, and the Pope had fierily objected that the man was tainted, like the Empress herself, with the latest heresy of the Greeks. The Pope secured the rejection of Anthimus; and the Pope died, as opponents of the Empress Theodora frequently did. But a courtly deacon, Vigilius, of the Papal suite, privately assured the Empress that she should have her Anthimus as Patriarch of Constantinople if *he* were Pope, and he went back to Rome with a promise of seven hundred pounds of gold, for bribing the voters, and an assurance of Greek assistance when an opportunity arrived. He worked with Belisarius and Antonina in framing the charge against Silverius, and when his partisans rushed into the street shouting that Silverius had become a monk, which was an act of abdication on the part of a Pope or bishop, he secured two hundred pounds of gold from Belisarius and opened his electoral campaign. Under the protecting shadow of the Greek general and his wife he became Pope Vigilius.

Theodora was one of the strangest characters whom the erratic currents of political and ecclesiastical life in the East had swept onto the imperial throne; and it had had many weird occupants. In her 'teens she had been the most salacious performer in the theatre, which was as bold as it had been in pagan Rome, and the most licentious courtesan in the city. While apologetic writers of the last century mutilated the plain testimony of contemporary witnesses in an attempt to discredit

this account of her, the manuscript was discovered of a small work by a very pious bishop of Ephesus who had shared her heresy and her very generous donations. He speaks of her with profound respect, yet casually, as if he boasted of a brand plucked from the burning, calls her "Theodora of the Brothel." We must not here follow her scarlet career until Justinian made her his mistress, then his wife and Empress,[1] and must be content with two points. The first is that, while her sexual conduct seems to have been correct after she became Empress, she was in all other respects entirely unscrupulous, and she had the sleek ferocity of a panther. The second is that Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, had been her chief rival and associate in vice and was still her intimate friend; and she had no imperial dignity to convert her to ways of chastity.

These were the women who were in a position to make and unmake archbishops and Popes now that the yoke of the barbarians—even Gibbon, though perhaps with subtle irony, uses that phrase at this point—had been cast off. With them were closely associated the two deacons of the Roman Church, sons of what were then called "Roman nobles," who became, in succession, Pope Vigilius and Pope Pelagius.

Milman (II, 43) very mildly pronounces Vigilius "the most doubtful character who had ever yet sat on the throne of St. Peter." Since he immediately afterwards tells us that Vigilius was rightly punished for his "crimes" —he is accused of several murders—we find it charitable of the ecclesiastical historian to entertain some doubt about the Pope's character. The other deacon, Pelagius, had for several years represented Rome at the Greek court and had contrived to make a fortune for himself in that city of universal graft. He was in the plot with Vigilius

[1] For a critical and lengthy study, with references to authorities and recent literature, see my *Empresses of Constantinople* (1913), chs. II and III.

and Theodora, and it was he whom Theodora sent in a swift ship to Rome when she heard that Pope Silverius had got the ear of the Emperor and was being conducted back to Rome under guard. The authorities tell us that it was Vigilius who sent some of his officers and slaves to seize the Pope on the journey and take him to a desolate island in the Mediterranean, and that it was widely believed at Rome that Vigilius had him killed there. The sordid story is usually relieved by praise of the heroism of Silverius, but the same authorities say that Silverius had got his election by bribery and the favour of the Goths, whom he had later betrayed.[1]

Pope Vigilius and Deacon Pelagius presently found that the fulfilment of a compact with the devil is not easily evaded. How they contrived to hold their positions for two or three years without taking any steps to have the Empress's prelate installed at Constantinople is not clear. All the authorities say that Vigilius, sobered by his sacred office, defied her; though there is a much-disputed letter in which he is made to assure her privately that he will carry out her wishes. We may conjecture that Belisarius was heavily engaged in war, and that for a time Vigilius had the support of most of his people. But, when the death of Silverius in a cruel exile became known, the Pope was weakened by a formidable opposition. He was accused of the murder of Silverius, of having in a fit of temper knocked down—he was a big man of giant strength—and killed one of his secretaries, and of having ordered the husband of his niece to be beaten to death.

He endeavoured to clear himself in part by an explicit condemnation of the new and monstrous heresy which

[1] The original authorities are Liberatus of Carthage (*Breviarium*, cap XXII, Migne, Vol. LXXIII), a contemporary cleric; Procopius, the leading Greek historian of the time (*On the Gothic War* and *Anecdotes*); Anastasius, the Roman (and semi-official) Librarian (*De Vita Pontificum*, "Vigilius," Migne, Vol. CXXVII); and the *Pontifical Chronicle*. The only points in dispute relate to details of little importance.

Theodora shared, and the Empress was infuriated. She sent an officer to Rome with peremptory orders to bring Vigilius to her. "Bring him, or by the Living God I will have your skin," she is reported to have said; and to the historian it does sound like the voice of Theodora. The Pope was seized at the altar and hurried to the quays; and one authority makes the crowd of Romans tearfully ask his blessing, while another makes them speed his departure with curses and stones. Doubtless both parties ran to the quay on the river. In some obscure way Vigilius managed to linger two years in Sicily, and at the end of 546 or the beginning of 547 he reached Constantinople.

To his surprise, he had a royal reception. Justinian headed the solemn procession which met him, and it is said that Pope and Emperor wept on each other's necks. Apparently Justinian curbed his wife and, as she died soon afterwards, the Pope must have been relieved. But the Emperor himself had now contracted a heresy—I spare the reader a description of these unceasing heresies of the Greeks—and demanded that Vigilius should support him and the Patriarch of Constantinople, who also held it. In a moment of courage, or of concern for his See, Vigilius refused. He fired an anathema at the Patriarch, who duly fired one at him in return. But Constantinople was not a safe place for such shots and, in short, Vigilius twice condemned the heresy and twice, hearing that the Romans proposed to replace him, recanted, and in the end took sanctuary in a church. He saw the soldiers enter and, clinging to the pillars of the altar while they tried to drag him away, he brought the altar down upon himself. Covered with dust, if not blood, he was led through the streets of Constantinople with a rope round his neck, "like a bear," and was put in a dungeon. Somehow he escaped and fled to Chalcedon, but Justinian brought him back, and, after another condemnation of the heresy and a third

recantation, he was allowed to take ship for Rome, but he died on the voyage. It is piquant to reflect that this miserable career of Vigilius was the longest pontificate in three centuries!

The nauseous story continues, as will be expected, with the pontificate of Pelagius I (556–560). His money and the favour of Justinian, whom he promised to support, won the election for him, but there was so general a conviction of his unworthiness that it was impossible to get three Italian bishops to consecrate him, as the canons demanded, and he had to be content with two. The nobles, the monks, and many of the clergy still held angrily aloof, though, under escort of the Emperor's representative, he swore at the altar in St. Peter's, holding the Bible in one hand and a cross in the other, that he was innocent of the taint of heresy and of any complicity in the evil treatment of Silverius and Vigilius: a very solemn act of perjury, but it enabled him to invoke the secular arm against the bishops and priests who still opposed him. Most of the Romans he disarmed by a generous use of his fortune. Italy was now a desolation. The Goths fought bravely, and the Greeks summoned half-savage Franks, Lombards, and other Teutonic peoples to help them. The land suffered such famine that mothers are said to have eaten their children. Rome shared the horror, and the one redeeming feature of the pontificate of Pelagius is that he used his private fortune very liberally to relieve their distress.

The next thirty years (560–590) are, says Milman, "the most barren and obscure period in the annals of the Papacy." Three Popes were added to the list. Though the first of them, John III, was guilty of the familiar Papal fault of accepting appeals from delinquent bishops in the provinces and ordering their reinstatement—the fighting bishops of the Middle Ages, as truculent and drunken as the knights, now appear in the chronicle—and the third, Pelagius II, has left us an

ingenuous letter (*Ep.* VI) in which he tells with horror how a bishop of Ephesus has blasphemously called himself the Œcumenical Patriarch (as the Popes called themselves), we know nothing about their character and are not interested in the discharge of their technical functions. It will, in fact, be better to confine ourselves in this chapter to the evolution of the hostility between East and West and the rigid separation of the Greek and Latin Churches.

The contention that in summoning the Greeks or Byzantinians to Italy and preparing the way for them by intrigue against the Goths the Popes had sought to promote the welfare of the Roman and the Italian people is ludicrous. They knew well that the Byzantine Empire was as corrupt in morals as the pagan Empire had ever been, and that its provincial administration was infamous in comparison with that of the older Romans or that of the Goths. From the Exarch (Viceroy) to the humbler officials, the Greeks in every province were simply blood-suckers. The imperial taxation was extortionate, and private graft was universal. It was a time of rapidly deepening poverty, for during twenty years vast armies of barbaric soldiers moved from end to end of Italy. Towns and villages were deserted and large tracts of country were left waste. Men despaired of growing food for themselves or of securing elementary safety, for the new European armies had begun the licence, to which they would cling for the next thousand years, to loot, rape, and kill wherever they went. Famine repeatedly racked the land, and during the pontificate of Pelagius II there were such floods that the rumour of a second Deluge spread. The Popes might plead that they had not foreseen these consequences, though even the feeblest-witted of them must have known what an attempt to exterminate the Gothic nation would mean, and certainly every Pope knew how the Greek officials behaved.

On the other hand, few historians question that a cordial co-operation with the Goths, who were uniformly friendly until the Popes began to intrigue with the Greeks, would have led to the re-establishment of civilization in Italy. Theodoric had given peace, prosperity, and social ideals to one-third of the country. But it would take two generations to educate soldiers who were so close to barbarism, and the tragedy of Theodoric's life was that he left no son. However, the demoralization which followed his death was arrested, and Totila, the last strong Gothic king, had the same ideals as Theodoric. In glaring contrast to the behaviour of the Pope's allies, he inflicted sentence of death upon any soldier who violated a woman. We will return later to the destruction of civilization in Italy, but we must remember for the rest of this chapter that the twenty years of savage war against the Goths cost millions of lives—Gibbon's estimate is between ten and fifteen millions—and we shall see later how bubonic plague swept over the impoverished and neglected land. The smooth generalization, which so many historians are content to repeat, that barbaric invasions, century after century, kept Italy at a low level, which might have been even lower but for the unselfish exertions of the Popes, ought to be erased from our literature. The Popes looked only to the interests of the Papacy; for we shall see later that they did not even guard or inspire the morals of the new Europe.

To what extent we must make an exception in the case of Gregory I (the Great), who ascended the Papal throne in the year 590, we shall see later. Here we need remark only that it is strange to claim that a deeply religious monk, a man who was convinced that the end of the world was near, must be regarded as a restorer of social ideals and secular civilization. But we have in this chapter only to consider how he and his successors acted in relation to the Greek Church until the final breach.

We saw what the Popes had obtained instead of that recognition of their supremacy for which they had ruined Italy. The clergy and people of Constantinople chuckled when one of their most religious Emperors treated the Popes as if they were refractory monks, and the Greek Patriarchs ceased to regard them as even colleagues of equal rank. Justinian, who has been amazingly fortunate in his historical repute, passed in the year 565 to " those tortures which are provided in the nether world " for cruel and extortionate princes—that is not the sentiment of a follower of the Popes, but of a Greek Christian lawyer of the time—and the tragi-comedy of Greek palace-life during the next thirty years does not interest us. It is enough that when Gregory I reopened communication with Constantinople, the Emperor, Maurice, was a man of decent character, if of poor wit. Gregory had spent eight years (578–586) representing the Papacy in Constantinople before he became Pope. He had never learned Greek or relaxed in his hatred of culture; and the only help he obtained for the Romans against the Lombards was " an arm of St. Andrew " and " the head of St. Luke." But few Popes can have had a better knowledge than he of Greek affairs and personalities.

Yet in his relations with the Greeks he showed in the most painful manner how a determination to assert the supremacy of the Papacy soured his virtues and caused a saint to behave repeatedly like an ill-mannered, bad-tempered, and not very scrupulous prince. As soon as he was elected he took up a problem which had long troubled the Papacy. On one of the occasions when, as we saw, the Popes acquiesced in an Eastern heresy, the ecclesiastical province of Istria had declared itself independent of Papal jurisdiction. Gregory sent a troop of soldiers to Aquileia with a command that the bishop and his leading clerics should come to Rome for judgment; and he said that this was " according to orders of

the Most Christian and Most Serene Lord of all." [1] But, when the bishop wrote to Constantinople, it appeared that the Emperor had given no such orders; and he, in fact, at once warned the Pope to mind his own business. It is unpleasant to read that when, in the following year, grave distress was caused in Aquileia by a great fire and the Churches sent relief funds, Gregory, the richest man in Europe, said that *his* money was " not for the enemies of the Church." He weakened the schism, as he called it, by bribery, and in the end, under a new Exarch, crushed it by violence. " The defence of the soul is more precious in the sight of God than the defence of the body," he said.

He next annoyed the Byzantinian court by not merely making a separate peace with the Lombards, but also paying them money to refrain from attacking Rome or its estates. They, of course, returned in a few years, and the Pope proposed to pay blackmail a second time. We learn from a long and angry letter (V, 40) which Gregory then wrote to the Emperor that Maurice had called him " an old fool "; as many did, both at Rome and Ravenna as well as at Constantinople. Humility was in Gregory a piebald virtue. " I am a miserable sinner," he often says in his letters; but, when the steward of his great estate in Sicily sends him a horse and five asses, he angrily says (II, 32): " I cannot ride the horse because it is a wretched nag, and I cannot ride the asses because they are asses."

We will, however, attribute it not to pride, but to the poisonous influence of the Papal pretensions, that he again fierily resented other bishops assuming the title of Œcumenical Bishop, as the Patriarch of Constantinople now did. This prelate, John the Faster, had the same repute as Gregory himself for piety and austerity, yet the Pope's letters to him are models of bad taste and

[1] *Epp.*, I, 16. All the statements made here about Gregory are taken from his letters, of which we have hundreds.

exhibitions of bad temper. He tells John (III, 53) that it would be less wicked to put a little meat into his belly than to tell lies. "We do not want to cause a quarrel," he quaintly says, "but we are quite ready for it if it is forced upon us." To the Emperor, who, as usual, told him to mind his own business, he described John as a hypocrite, "a wolf in sheep's clothing," a professor of Christian humility who arrogated a "blasphemous title" which ought to be "far from the hearts of all Christians." Since it was known even to the most ignorant cleric that Gregory himself most emphatically claimed that title, the Greek bishops were politely supercilious. Gregory tried to detach the Bishops of Antioch and Alexandria from the Patriarch of Constantinople and bring them into the Roman alliance; and Eulogius of Alexandria, who had some sense of humour, gravely replied that he submitted to the Pope's "commands" and would never again call any man Universal Bishop.

He would, of course, be aware that Gregory had a few years earlier written (*Epp.*, IX, 12) to the Bishop of Syracuse: "As to the Church of Constantinople, who doubts that it is subject to the Apostolic See?" It added even more to their disdain of Gregory that in the course of their correspondence he had said (V, 43) that this "blasphemous title" had been offered to the Popes by the Council of Chalcedon, but that neither Leo I nor any of his successors had ever used it. The statement that Leo and his successors had never called themselves head of the universal Church was too amusing to be called untruthful; and to tell Greek bishops that one of their Councils had acknowledged the title argues an intellect of a poor order.

We saw in an earlier chapter how Pope Zosimus attempted to deceive the bishops of Africa by quoting canons of the (Papal) Council of Sardica as those of the Great Œcumenical Council of Nicæa. Leo I, one of the most truculent claimants of supremacy, had feebly

attempted to impose in the same manner upon the six hundred bishops of the Council of Chalcedon in the year 450. His Legates were instructed to read the spurious canon to them, but it had at once been exposed. The Council had already decreed (Canon XXVIII) in the most explicit terms that the Bishop of Constantinople had the same power in the East as the Bishop of Rome had in the West; and at the close of the Council the bishops, paying beautiful Greek compliments to Leo, had expressly reminded him of this canon. It is beyond question that Gregory knew this.

The last phase of this painful chapter of Gregory's pontificate is revolting. By another of the sordid and half-savage revolutions that were now common in the Greek world, a particularly brutal, repulsive, physically deformed officer fought and bribed his way to the throne (602), and the Emperor Maurice, his father, his five brothers, his five sons, and a large number of their supporters were foully murdered. Yet Gregory at once sent to this most vicious and dissipated murderer, the new Emperor Phocas, a letter (XIII, 31) which begins " Glory be to God on high " and ends " Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad." He was probably misinformed about the facts, say the apologists. But several months later, when the facts must have been fully known in every tavern, Gregory writes again (XIII, 38) to Phocas in the same strain, rejoicing that the " night of tyranny " has ended in " a day of liberty "; and he sends a letter (XIII, 39) of servile compliment to the Empress Leontia, compared with whom Theodora of the Brothel had been a lady, hailing her as " a second Pulcheria." The Empress Pulcheria had been almost the one princess of the Greek house of whose virginity, piety, and refinement we feel confident. Gregory even had a special column dedicated to Phocas in the Roman Forum.

Other aspects of the work and character of " Gregory the Great " we will consider in the next chapter. The

Pope died before, in 610, the inevitable assassination of the brutal and squalid Phocas occurred; and, as if in derision of Gregory's praise of his virtues, that organ of his body which chiefly represented his character to the Greeks was borne on a pole through the streets of Constantinople. The world was sinking deeper into barbarism, though the Eastern Empire was still immune from invasions; and we begin to see why even the " great " Popes failed to arrest the degradation. Gregory's outbursts left rancorous and disdainful feelings in both cities. Instead of the Pope being dependent upon casual and distorted news from Constantinople, as his apologists say, he had had as representative in that city one of the most accomplished of the Roman clergy, and this priest, Sabinianus, was elected to succeed him. He so execrated the name of Gregory and denounced his vandalism that there was a common belief in Rome that, after seventeen months of reign, the ghost of Gregory visited him in the night and slew him. It is more likely to have been one of Gregory's monks.

The apologists are singularly modest about the fact that Sabinian's successors, Boniface III and Boniface IV, at last won from the Greeks a recognition that the Pope was " head of all the Churches." It was, of course, the bestial Phocas who awarded it. The Patriarch of Constantinople had resented the Neronic savour of his murders and dissipations; the Popes preferred to be " badly informed " about them. From Phocas they also got permission to convert the Pantheon, the ancient Roman temple of all the gods, into a Church of St. Mary: which is the single redeeming feature of that sordid decade, since it has preserved intact one noble Roman monument for us.

But the new and deeply-tainted alliance was short-lived. The monkish intellect of the East had entered upon the last phase of the sanguinary struggle over the true nature of Christ, the rebels now entrenching them-

selves in the horrid heresy that he had only one will (Monothelitism) instead of two, and the Popes were first entangled in it and then in violent reaction to it. Next the imperial patrons of the inventors of heresies adopted Iconoclasm, or a fierce antipathy to the use of statues in religion, and this happened to coincide with the advance of the Muslim upon the Byzantine Kingdom and the transfer of the interest of the Popes to new European powers.

At the very time when the Caliph Omar rallied all the forces of Arabia, not to the Koran, at which most of them laughed when Mohammed died, but to the glorious plan of looting the fabulously rich provinces of ancient Persia and those of the Greek Emperor, the Patriarch of Constantinople and his monarch rent the Empire by proclaiming that all good Christians must adopt the new heresy. The Patriarch Sergius explained to Pope Honorius how they had now discovered the correct formula about Christ, and the Greeks were quite content with the Pope's reply. The apologists explain, of course, that the Pope did not quite understand this latest subtlety—it is hardly more subtle than the theory of a flat earth—of the Greeks; and they decline to connect the Pope's satisfactory reply to Constantinople with the immense enrichment, as described in the *Pontifical Chronicle*, of the churches of Rome under Honorius at a time when Italy was sinking deeper into poverty. The new shower of gold and silver, however, had its dangers. At the death of Honorius in 638 the See remained vacant for a long time, and one day the officer in command of the Greek garrison pointed out to his men that it seemed wrong that the churches should be so rich while there was no pay available for soldiers. They sent to Ravenna for the greedy Exarch, and they looted the churches and divided the profits.

The new Pope lasted a few months, and his successor boldly anathematized the heretics of the East. He had little to lose, for the Emperor Heraclius, broken by the

victories of the Arabs in the field and the domestic difficulties which his incestuous marriage with a niece had created, was near death. A sequel of these troubles, however, gave Rome a singular experience. For a few years after the death of the Emperor his widow and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, who supported her, held their ground against their fierce opponents, but in 642 they fell. The Empress had her tongue, her son his nose, slit by the public executioner—two of a dozen forms of mutilation which now became common in East and West—and the ex-Patriarch fled to Rome and laid his Monothelite heresy at the feet of the Pope. He was most honourably received and granted a comfortable retreat in Ravenna; where he returned to his heretical vomit, if I may use the ecclesiastical language of the time. Pope Theodorus was so moved that he invented a new form of anathema. Into the ink with which he wrote it he poured a few drops of the blood of Christ from his chalice; and all his clergy looked on and approved.

This stern attitude toward the Greeks was maintained by Pope Martin, who followed, and the new Emperor ordered his Exarch to seize the Pope and send him to Constantinople. Legend says that the Exarch sent a man to stab the Pope at the altar, and that the man was miraculously struck with blindness at the crucial moment. The truth is that the Romans flew to arms, and the Exarch was not very energetic. Soon afterwards a new and more vigorous Exarch came to Rome to execute the Emperor's order. The soldiers found that the Pope had set up his bed before the high altar in St. Peter's, but piety no longer cowered before such superstitions. The Pope, old and ailing, was shipped to Constantinople. There he was contemptuously left lying on deck all day, while crowds stared at him, and he spent three months in prison. Two soldiers had to hold him up when he appeared before the Senate and listened to their gross abuse. His clothes were torn off and, half-naked, an iron ring round his

neck, he was dragged through the streets by the public executioner. A few further months in prison and a cruel exile ended his life. His chief supporters lost their tongues and their right hands.

The Romans had elected a Pope in his absence, but he lived only a few months after the death of Martin; and both he and his successor maintained a prudent silence about the number of Christ's wills. In fact, the second of them, Vitalianus, had an experience which *might* be called heaping coals of fire upon the head of the wicked Emperor. Constantinople, tired of his crimes and vices, drove him out, and he took ship for Sicily. He would, he announced, desert the ungrateful East and restore the great Empire of Constantine in the West. He passed to Rome, and the Pope gave him a royal reception and many days of entertainment; at the end of which he looted Rome of all its bronze, his Exarch having previously taken the gold and silver, even stripping the gilt-bronze tiles from the roof of the Pantheon. From Sicily, to which he returned, he continued to loot the churches of all Italy until, in 668, his bath-attendant ended his hectic career with an iron soap-dish.

Seven Popes of colourless personality succeeded each other on the throne during the next fifteen years. The Greek heresy came to an end in a new Œcumenical Council, especially when its most famous champion failed to bring life to a corpse which was solemnly laid before the bishops, and friendly relations with the Emperors—every Pope still had a tax to pay to the Greeks after election—were resumed; though eyes, ears, noses, tongues, hands, feet, and any other detachable organs were hacked off every week. In 687, while Pope Conon lay dying, Archdeacon Paschal sent word to the Exarch at Ravenna that he would pay him one hundred pounds of gold (about £4000) for election, and the Exarch got him elected. But his opponents elected the Archpriest Theodotus, and the rivals held each one half of the

Lateran Palace. Others now chose the priest Sergius, and the Exarch transferred the debt to him, and for a hundred pounds of gold made him Pope.

Paschal was found guilty of magical practices and turned into a monk. Sergius defied the Greek Emperor over some new trouble, and an officer was sent to bring him along the familiar route to Constantinople. We see how the Greek interest is waning when we read that the matter ended with the Pope hiding the imperial officer under his bed to protect him from the Romans. Another revolution in the East postponed the Emperor's vengeance, and Sergius was dead when the Emperor waded back to the throne through a river of blood. He summoned the new Pope, Constantine, to him, and that Pope, after enjoying a magnificent reception, signed any parchments they cared to put before him, and returned in triumph to Rome: to discover that the Emperor was tainted with heresy and induce the Romans to declare themselves independent of Constantinople and under the rule of the Popes. A few years later the Iconoclast heresy reddened the Greek world and gave occasion to the Popes to sever relations with the East and turn, with very hesitating mind, to the new power which had established itself in Italy—the Lombards.

CHAPTER III

THE POPE RULES THE RUINS OF EUROPE

In tracing to its virtual termination the long quarrel with the Greeks and the complete failure of the Papal policy in the East, we have outrun the record of events in what we must consider the proper domain of the Popes. Our excursion into the Eastern Empire, which was not devastated by barbarians, must have been so offensive to the nostrils of the reader that he will wonder what we shall find in Italy in the seventh century; though I have here given only the few details about Greek life which my purpose required me to give.

There are in our kindly age historical writers who offer us pleasant pictures of even the Greek world. Certainly it had pretty, if lifeless, art, some scholars, and a few saints. But a world in which the princes, with the full support of their prelates, slit noses and tongues, burned out eyes and cut off ears, hands, feet, and sex-organs every week—a world in which an Emperor could have his servants strip and flog his mother in the Palace, and one of the greatest of the Empresses could have the eyes of her son cut out so that she might retain her power—a world in which one Archbishop of Constantinople was emasculated in public for conscientious conduct and another exposed himself in open court to prove that he could not have raped a nun—was surely barbaric. We wonder, therefore, what we shall find in Italy; though what we have already seen will have prepared us for unpleasant scenes.

In my *Splendour of Moorish Spain* I drew attention to a remarkable fact which seems to have escaped the notice

of other historians. About the year 600 civilization, which we now reckon to have been about four thousand years old at that time, was extinct all over the earth. China and India happened to be in the darkest hour of one of their long periods of reaction before the dawn of a splendid new age. The Persian civilization had just seen its second rich efflorescence end in such semi-barbarism as we find in the Byzantine Empire; and the Arabs, who would before the end of the century create a fine civilization in Syria, had not yet issued from their desert camps and barbaric market-towns. Russia, Prussia, and Scandinavia had not learned even the rudiments of civilization, and England was just learning them. The one-fourth of Europe which the Popes ruled—Italy, Spain, France, and Western Germany—had sunk from the high level of civilization to which the Romans had raised it to a state of semi-barbarism. We shall now see this Papal area, as we may call it, sink steadily lower during four centuries, while the remaining regions of the earth which had once been civilized rise to a greater height than ever. Yet our literature continues to repeat the Catholic legend that during this period the Papacy was slowly refining the refractory human material which had poured over the old Roman provinces.

We are tempted to see this Catholic world as its life is reflected in the eight hundred and fifty letters, often of considerable length, which Gregory I has left. They cover the entire area, and often go into such detail as to direct the Pope's steward, hundreds of miles away, at what age he must sell or kill the cows on the farm. These letters, in fact, are freely used by the writers who tell the world how wise a statesman the Pope was, how inflexible a moralist, how splendid a force in the preservation of European civilization.

Since it is notorious that Gregory expected the end of the world in his own time, and equally notorious that the degradation of Europe continued and deepened for

four hundred years after his death, we reflect at once that there is here some deception. But we are already familiar with the method. The letters in which Gregory repeatedly denounces the vices and crimes of bishops and abbots are ignored. The letters in which he scorns culture and forbids education are misrepresented. The letters from which we gather that this monk-Pope who expects the end of the world has contrived to become in fourteen years the richest land-owner and slave-owner in Europe are not candidly appreciated.[1] And we have already seen how the letters are often in themselves entirely misleading.

I referred in the preceding chapter to the letters in which the Pope showers nauseous compliments upon one of the most vicious and repulsive imperial couples who ever sat upon the golden throne at Constantinople. The reign of Maurice had been comparatively decent, the massacre which ended it was revolting, and the personalities of Phocas and Leontia were disgusting, yet Gregory, who must have been well-informed, would in his letters completely deceive us about these events if we had not the historical record. And this is not the only instance of such behaviour on his part. He wrote similar letters repeatedly to Queen Brunichildis of France.[2] He praised her " devout mind," and said that she was " filled with the piety of heavenly grace." He granted the pallium to a loose Frank bishop who supported her and refused it to a more learned and devout bishop who rebuked her crimes and vices. Yet she was beyond question the most scarlet woman of that scarlet age and country. The contemporary Frank, Bishop Gregory of Tours, gives us a

[1] Generally free from these historical delinquencies is W. F. H. Dudden's *Gregory the Great* (2 vols., 1905). At the opposite extreme is the account of Gregory and his work in the first volume of Mgr. H. A. Mann's *Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages* (18 vols., 1902, etc.). This weird Catholic enterprise is so desperately sophistical on every page that it will have to be completely ignored in this and the following chapters.

[2] *Epp.*, VI, 5, 50, 59; IX, 11, 117; XI, 62, 63.

full account of her and her times in his *History of the Franks*. Even the diplomatic Lecky, who was almost a Positivist in finding excuses for the evil of the time, forgets this policy when he comes to speak of Brunichildis and the Franks. He fills several pages of his *History of European Morals* with the most revolting details of torture, murder, adultery, rape, theft, and every species of corruption; and the "worst sovereign," he says, "found flatterers or agents in ecclesiastics." The central figures of this epic of vice and violence are the rival queens Brunichildis and Fredegonde, two of the most vicious women in history; and Gregory finds Brunichildis, from whom he wanted favours, "filled with the piety of heavenly grace."

When we set aside the deceptive accounts which Catholic and some other writers give of Gregory and his work and consider all the facts, we find it difficult to understand the man. This intensely puritanical and austere monk flatters the vilest princes. This man of simple piety who fills his books with devils, angels, and the most infantile stories of miracles, acquires more than fifteen hundred square miles of estates for the Papacy, with an income of between £300,000 and £400,000 (well over a million in our values) a year; and he makes this beginning of the Temporal Power of the Papacy by urging the rich to see that the end of the world is near and it is better to unload their property upon the Church. In his books he is as credulous as a peasant; in his letters he is a business-man of untiring energy and vigilance. He insists strongly upon justice, and he has armies of slaves working his estates. The few phrases, cut out of their context, in which apologists make him disapprove of the institution of slavery are taken from letters in which he merely gives their freedom to a few slaves who have inherited money and have consented to leave it to the Church. And in letter after letter he shows himself irascible, vindictive, haughty, greedy, and in some ways unscrupulous.

The key to his character is that when he became Pope the official Papal ambition perverted his better qualities. But that is not the point which interests us most. What we ask is whether this strongest and most deeply religious Pope in the first thousand years of the history of the Roman Church rendered a proportionate moral or social service to the race. If we like the answers to such questions given in historical facts, not rhetoric, it is surely simple. Rome, Italy, France, and Western Germany—Spain passed to the Arabs—sank to a lower depth than ever. Lecky says that the seventh century, which opened with Gregory's pontificate, is the darkest century of the Dark Age. He is wrong; but the fact that Europe was worse in the eighth century, and still worse in the tenth, and that Rome was the foulest city of all in the worst period, is a monumental refutation of the claim that the Popes used their influence for social regeneration.

One reason is clear in the record of Gregory. He used all his energy to secure more wealth and power for the Popes and the Church in the belief that they would use these to make men virtuous. On the contrary, and making every allowance for a good bishop or abbot here and there, the wealth and power themselves corrupted the Church, from the Popes to the monks. If there is one sin that Gregory, in his letters, finds more widespread than any other, it is simony. The better-paid clerical offices were bought and sold in every country, and they attracted the sons of the new "nobility." "Barbarians who had barely abjured Odin," says the French historian Martin, speaking of his own country at this period, "installed themselves with their wives, soldiers, and hunting dogs in the episcopal palaces."

A second important reason for Gregory's failure was his approval of the crass ignorance and illiteracy into which nine-tenths of Europe had now passed. He writes (VI, 54) to Bishop Desiderius of Vienne that he learns—he had spies everywhere—that the bishop is

teaching " grammar," which in the old Roman language means opening an elementary school, and he orders him to desist from so " horrible " an enterprise. Mgr. Mann puts against this some praise of learning from what he calls Gregory's *Commentary on the First Book of Kings ;* and even in the Migne edition of the Fathers it is stated that the book is spurious. It was a tradition in Rome for centuries—John of Salisbury learned it there—that Gregory burned the only collection of books which remained in Rome from pagan days and had the marble statues which still survived broken up. The conduct of Gregory's successor confirms this. Such men add to the power of the Church, but they help to destroy civilization.

In an age when most of our literature accepts the myth that the greater Popes helped to rebuild civilization in Europe it is necessary to make these observations, but for the reader with any sense of historical proportion they ought to be superfluous. Civilization was *not* rebuilt in Europe until, after the year 1000, the influence of the Spanish Arabs began to be felt. The social condition sank, with a few temporary and regional recoveries, lower and lower during several centuries. It is especially in Rome that we must look for the result of any beneficent work of the Popes; and it is chiefly in Rome that we find the steady deterioration. We saw how Pope Sabinian, who succeeded Gregory, tried to restore some respect for culture; and he lasted seventeen months. He is accused of greed and of exploiting the people in a time of famine, but the legend that he was killed by Gregory's ghost is more instructive. The better Romans were with Sabinian, but the ignorant mass threatened even his dead body, and it had to be conveyed from the Lateran Palace to St. Peter's across the country outside Rome.

The few points of interest in the lives of the Popes who occupied the See during the next hundred years we have already seen, and we will resume the story with the election of Gregory II in the year 715. The scene is

now materially changed. The Greeks still hold Sicily and South Italy and have an Exarch of diminishing importance at Ravenna in the north. But they need all their resources to check the Arabs in the East, and their corrupt power in Italy is doomed. Rome has declared itself independent and is nervously facing the Lombards who have occupied the north of Italy.

The Greeks had, in alliance with the Papacy and in gross disregard of the consequences, summoned the Lombards from the Danube region to Italy to help them to destroy the Goths. Some writers say that these Lombards were the most cruel, destructive, and lustful representatives of the Teutonic race, but they differed little from the others. In the appalling carnage of the long Gothic war they behaved much as the Indian Allies of the French and English did in America in the eighteenth century. Even in the time of Gregory I, when they had generally been converted to Arian Christianity, they spread at times as far as the walls of Rome, looting and burning churches, violating nuns, murdering or mutilating on every side. We read that one of their chiefs made a jewelled drinking-cup of the skull of a rival whom he had slain and compelled the widow to drink from it. Although they were now, in 715, Catholics, they were generally hostile to Rome; and it was from no Papal tuition that the savages of yesterday had become a well-organized nation with large cities, a respectable code of law, a considerable development of art, and a much higher prosperity than that of Rome.

Once more the Papacy had, as in the days of Theodoric, a chance to use a vigorous nation for the restoration of civilization. At the time at which we have arrived, the Lombards agreed with the Romans in their detestation of the Greek Iconoclasts; and their King Liutprand, one of the best of his race, was a man of high character and a devout Catholic. Hodgkin, the highest authority on them, describes Liutprand as very strict in his regard for

chastity—which writers were beginning to call an angelic virtue, since it was so rarely found in humans—justice, and the duties of religion, and eager to found a kingdom like that of Theodoric the Goth. Few will question the truth of Dean Milman's words:—

> If the Papacy had entered into a confederacy of interests with the Lombard kings and contented itself with spiritual power, by which it might have ruled almost uncontrolled over barbarian monarchs, and with large ecclesiastical possessions without sovereign rights, Italy might again perhaps have been consolidated into a great Kingdom.[1]

The obstacle to the realization of this ideal was not King Liutprand, who, says Hodgkin, "carried compliance with the Papal admonitions to the very verge of weakness and disloyalty to his people."[2] The obstacle was the determination of the Popes to retain secular power over Rome and the provinces which Gregory I had so fatally bequeathed to the Papacy. If the Lombards had been permitted to fuse their people and the Italians in a Kingdom of Italy, the Dark Age would soon have ended in that country and might have closed more speedily in the rest of Europe. They were not permitted because the Popes, whose spiritual supremacy was now unchallenged, were determined to have a secular kingdom of their own in Central Italy; they secured this kingdom, apart from certain extraordinary frauds which they practised, by summoning the Franks to destroy the Lombard civilization; and, while apologists claim that this kingdom was necessary to guard the spiritual independence of the Papacy, it is one of the most notorious of historical facts that it completely corrupted the Papacy and brought upon Italy a long succession of devastating wars.

The evil of the Papal policy betrayed itself at once under Gregory II. Another blood-drenched revolution

[1] *History of Latin Christianity*, II, 417.
[2] *Italy and Her Invaders*, 1916, VI, 499.

in the Byzantine palace had prepared the way for a robust soldier who somehow espoused a sort of Protestant movement which had begun in the Greek Church. We call it Iconoclasm, or a zeal to destroy religious statues, but it meant also a hostility to relics, monks, and other adulterations of the Christian faith. How the monks, a vast crowd in the East, were forced to walk in the Hippodrome arm in arm with the prostitutes or to sleep with the nuns, how their long beards were oiled and fired, and a hundred other barbarities were perpetrated, does not concern us here. But, when the Greek Emperor tried to enforce his decree in the Exarchate of Ravenna, the Pope instigated a rebellion, hoping to annex the province to his estates. King Liutprand, however, could not tolerate the extension of secular Papal power in the north, and he conquered the distracted province for himself; whereupon the Pope summoned the Greeks to oust the Lombards. At Rome rival parties of pro-Lombards and pro-Greeks appeared, and some of the leading Romans conspired to murder the Pope and were themselves killed by the people. There were plots, skirmishes, and anathemas on all sides, but the trouble ended for the time in an alliance of all Italy against the Greek Iconoclasts. Liutprand came to Rome, knelt for the Pope's blessing, and offered his shining armour and his golden crown at the tomb of the Apostles.

Gregory III (731–741) enjoyed the fruits of this peace for seven or eight years. Owing to the new fervour of all for statues and relics, he was able to decorate and enrich the churches, and he sent one sonorous curse after another over the sea to Constantinople, which his messengers never reached. But the growing power of Liutprand irked him, and he began to intrigue among the vassals of the Lombard King. One of the chief weaknesses of the Lombard State was that it was a federation of strong duchies which were always prone to chafe against the monarchical bond. When the Pope

tried to exploit this weakness, Liutprand unleashed his troops once more, and it seemed possible that he would take Rome itself. One of the rebel dukes had taken refuge in Rome and had received aid from the Pope in his attempt to recover his duchy. No help could now be expected from Greece. The Popes must find another "protector."

From a much earlier period they had occasionally concluded that the Franks, the most powerful of the Teutonic peoples—it is, of course, a polite fiction that the French people are a "Latin nation"—were the most suitable. The barrier of the Alps would discourage them from constant interference in the life of Rome, yet their formidable armies could be summoned whenever necessary to crush the Pope's enemies. In the latter part of the sixth and during the seventh century these Franks, who were still raw barbarians, ready to respond to any appeal to fight and loot, had several times invaded Italy at the invitation of the Popes, and had helped in the devastation and impoverishment of the country. Now, after 732, their fame spread throughout Christendom. The Arabs had, in the extraordinary energy of their first expansion, marched along the entire northern coast of Africa, crossed to Spain, and with a relatively small force wrested it from the Visigoths. They had then swept north of the Pyrenees and were pouring over France when they were defeated and driven back to Spain by the Franks under Charles Martel. Very probably Gregory III had in mind an appeal to Charles when he broke the peace by assisting the rebels against the Lombard King. However that may be, he now sent him an offer of the title of Consul of Rome with rich presents that included the golden keys of the Tomb of St. Peter and a few filings from what were fraudulently alleged to be the chains which had fettered Peter in prison.

Charles Martel received the deputation with great courtesy, but he must have smiled. He shines in our

history-classes and text-books to-day as the saviour of the faith and the champion of Christendom, but to the more devout Frankish clergy and monks of his time he was "Judas" and "Anti-Christ." The monkish chronicles curse him luridly. His armies looted churches and monasteries and violated nunneries as freely as did the Muslim, and he was one of the worst corruptors of the bishoprics. Liutprand, moreover, was his close ally and friend. The Lombard King had fought with him at the head of his army against the Arabs, and had then, in the old Teutonic fashion, adopted his son Pepin. However, both Charles and the Pope died soon afterwards, and the new Pope, Zachary, went in solemn procession to Liutprand's camp and, after impressive religious ceremonies and a banquet which seems to have made an even deeper impression in history, they signed a twenty-years' peace. Unfortunately, Liutprand died soon afterwards, and the first phase of the final tragedy opened.

Charles Martel, the ruthless robber-warrior who figures in our history as the Saviour of European civilization from the hordes of the Infidel, had not been King of the Franks. The last descendant of the ancient line of kings lingered, spineless and half-witted, in the palace, and its Mayor (Major Officer) exercised the royal power. This power Charles had divided between his two sons, but the elder experienced a religious conversion at Rome, abdicated, and entered an Italian monastery. Pepin, the younger son, then sent two clerics to ask the Pope whether, seeing that he held the royal power, it would be improper of him to seize the crown. Pope Zachary replied that Pepin not only might but must take the crown from the King; and from that day his descendants would be reminded every few years that they owed the crown to "the Blessed Peter." Whether the Pope had inspired the whole procedure is not known—even our *Cambridge Medieval History* leaves this open—but Pepin had been educated by the monks of the Abbey of St.

Denis, and he was extremely receptive. They do not seem to have taught him to read and write, but they, we shall see, gave him a remarkable degree of credulity. He was deeply impressed when the Pope came to France to crown him and laid sonorous curses upon any who should ever dare to rebel against Pepin or his God-appointed descendants. Thus did the Pope create that divine right of kings which would inspire many wars and encourage revolting greeds, and would in the end prove a most costly obstacle to social and political progress.

In the meantime the course of Lombard history was approaching the final disastrous conflict. Liutprand's elder son was a quiet and devout man, and when his soldiers compelled him to attack, the Pope so moved or intimidated him that he abdicated. The younger brother, Aistulph, who replaced him was, on the contrary, a fiery and ambitious soldier and a man who scorned priestly dictation. When his troops spread over Italy as far as Rome, Pope Stephen III went out to essay on him the legendary power of the pontifical eye, but it was an ignominious failure. Writers who conclude that Aistulph must have been religious because, when his men overran the Vatican suburb—it was still outside the walls—and looted its churches, he himself collected the bodies of dead saints from the churches and cemeteries, forget that relics were then very valuable loot. He had sufficient superstition to shrink from looting St. Peter's, but otherwise he and his men burned churches as light-heartedly as farms, and left the nunneries everywhere in a painful condition.

The Pope went to France to lay before Pepin, who was very reluctant to interfere, a tearful account of these outrages. Aistulph withdrew Pepin's monk-brother from his monastery and sent him to thwart the Pope's mission, but the Pope got the luckless man arrested as a vagabond monk and incarcerated in a French monastery, in which he conveniently died shortly afterwards. The Pope then

admonished Pepin " by all the divine mysteries and the day of judgment " to come to Italy and, without shedding more blood than he could help, recover its territory for the Papacy. Aistulph retired when the Franks appeared in Italy, but he took the field as gaily as ever when they returned to France. He besieged Rome, and even its priests and abbots now buckled on swords and mounted the walls. We have four hysterical appeals which the Pope sent to Pepin in the course of the year 755, and the Frank monarch took not the least notice of either the cries of anguish or the discreet threats of divine vengeance.

Stephen then resorted to a trick which strains the resources of the modern apologist. The Popes had for a long time found it profitable to represent to such monarchs as Pepin that the provinces they claimed were the property of " the Blessed Peter," so that they could seem unselfish in their efforts to recover them. Stephen sent to Pepin a letter which pretended to have been written in heaven by Peter himself and miraculously conveyed to earth! It threatened the King that he might give up all hope of entering heaven unless he started at once for Italy. Apologists like Mann airily say that, of course, the Pope did not mean this to be taken as a miraculous letter, and that there is no evidence that Pepin regarded it as such. They, however, dare not translate any part of the letter for their readers, and they conceal the fact that Pepin, who had resisted really poignant human appeals for more than a year (from the end of 754 to the spring of 756), hurried to Italy as soon as he received the Peter letter.

The document, which is published in the Migne collection of Stephen's letters, opens without a word of the customary address of a Pope to a monarch. It is long and has never been translated, but I need give only a few sentences to show that the ignorant and credulous King was to understand that it had *not* been written by the Pope:—

> I, Peter the Apostle, of whom you are adopted sons, admonish you to defend the city of Rome, the people committed to my charge, and the church in which my body lies, from the hands of enemies and the contamination of foreign nations. . . . Be very sure that I am alive in your presence, as if in the flesh. . . . I, Peter the Apostle, present among you alive, as if in the flesh. . . . Our Lady, the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, joins with me in laying this obligation upon you. . . . It is I who, by the grace of God, gave you victory over your enemies. . . . If you delay to deliver the Holy Apostolic Church of God, committed to me, and its bishop, know that by the authority of the Blessed Trinity and in virtue of my apostolate you are, for transgressing my command, shut out from the Kingdom of God and life eternal.[1]

Pepin, who had for more than a year completely ignored appeals which in their statements of facts were far more impressive than this, now went at once to Italy and recovered the Papal territory. Aistulph died soon afterwards, and, as a price of his mediation between the quarrelling heirs to his power, the Pope secured some further territory.

The Papacy was now richer than it had been even in the days of Gregory I, and the baneful consequences of this enrichment at once became apparent. When Pope Paul I, the successor of Stephen, lay upon his deathbed in the year 767, only ten years after the recovery of the temporal dominions, Rome was startled by the arrival of a troop of soldiers and armed peasants with Toto, Duke of Nepi, and his three brothers riding at the head. Toto represents one class of the new "nobility" of Papal Rome: the nobles with large estates in the country and mansions in the city. A second class of what were called nobles held the highest offices in the city and in the Papal Court. These officials doubtless received such elementary education as was provided for a few in Rome, but we shall see presently that they were as brutal and primitive in character as the ignorant

[1] Migne collection of the Latin Fathers, Vol. LXXXIX, col. 1004.

swashbucklers who now led their few hundred followers into Rome and dominated the city.

The " psychological " historians who secure Catholic approval by claiming that the more candid historical writers of the last generation did not trouble to understand what they call " the medieval mind," really vindicate it by suppressing the uglier facts. There is no need for any subtle analysis. The Italian bandit of the last century, who mixed prayers and murders without the least feeling of incongruity, had exactly the same kind of mind and religion. The requirements of his faith were, he felt, that he should implicitly believe whatever the priests taught him and should attend certain obligatory services, in a language which he could not understand, in church. This was for the overwhelming majority in the Middle Ages the kind of religion which the Roman Church required, and vice and violence were universal.

Certainly Toto and his brothers went beyond the common licence of the time, though we shall find the highest Papal officials not far removed from them. They seized a bishop who was in Rome when the Pope died, and compelled him to consecrate one of the four brothers, Constantine, to succeed Paul. Constantine occupied the Lateran Palace during thirteen months and discharged the usual functions of a Pope, ordaining priests and consecrating bishops, while his brothers shared the rich revenues of the new Papal Kingdom. Then two of the leading officials of the Papal Court, Christopher and his son Sergius, declared that they had a vocation to the monastic life and begged permission to leave Rome and bury themselves in a provincial monastery. They were suspected, but they repeated on solemn oath to the Pope that this was their sole intention, and they were allowed to go. They fled to the Lombards, came back with Lombard troops, and made a bloody end of Toto and his supporters. The Romans, distrusting them, hastily elected a monk, but Christopher and Sergius drove him

out and made them elect another, "a chaste and holy monk" who had worked under them for some years. He became Stephen IV.

The appalling events which followed are described at length by the Roman Librarian and Secretary, Anastasius, who lived soon afterwards and was a very loyal Papalist.[1] The followers of Christopher and Sergius, who had returned to their posts in the Lateran, seized the bishop whom Toto had compelled to consecrate his brother, cut out his eyes and his tongue, and left him to die of hunger and thirst in a monastery. They cut out the eyes of a surviving brother of the late Pope and imprisoned him also in a monastery. Constantine himself they first put in a woman's saddle on horseback, his feet heavily weighted, and dragged round Rome. On the following morning he was brought before the bishop and clergy for the ceremony of degradation and was sentenced to imprisonment in a monastery. But the partisans of the new Pope were dissatisfied. They brought him from the monastery, cut out his eyes, and left him lying on the street. Supporters of his who fled to the churches were dragged out and deprived of their tongues and eyes. Pope Stephen then sent Sergius to give a diplomatic report to King Pepin, and, as that monarch had died, he reported to his sons, Charles (the future Charlemagne) and Carloman. They sent French bishops to Rome, and Constantine was brought before a synod of these and the Italian bishops; and with their own consecrated fists they fell upon him when he attempted to defend himself.

The "chaste and holy monk," as Anastasius calls Pope Stephen, who had presided at these orgies, found his patrons, Christopher and Sergius, arrogant and avaricious after their triumph, and he turned to the Lombards, who also seem to have gained nothing by supplying troops to the victorious nobles. The situation again provokes a smile at the legend that the Popes civilized

[1] *De Vita Pontificum*, XCVI.

the barbarians. Pavia, the Lombard capital, was now the most highly civilized city in Europe: Rome, it will surely be admitted, had sunk to the level of barbarism.[1] The Pope sent his Chamberlain, Paul Afiarta, to Pavia, where one of the finest, and certainly the most cultivated, of the Lombard Kings, Didier (or Desiderius), now ruled. The story is at this point obviously manipulated by the Roman chronicler in order to defend the character of his " chaste and holy monk," but it is futile of modern apologists to try to take advantage of this. For it is plainly stated in the official *Pontifical Chronicle* that Stephen's successor Hadrian, the most religious and most important Pope since Gregory I, told the Lombard envoys that Stephen himself " caused the eyes of Christopher and Sergius to be cut out " because Didier promised the return of certain territories to the Papacy if they were removed.[2]

Afiarta returned from his secret mission to Rome, and shortly afterwards King Didier settled in the Vatican district, outside the walls, with a body of troops. He came, Rome was told, as a pilgrim to St. Peter's, and the Pope went from the city to confer with him. When the Pope returned to the Lateran Palace, Papal soldiers in the charge of Christopher forced their way in and threatened him. We can guess by what sort of assurances the Pope disarmed them and was permitted to return to St. Peter's, while Afiarta's men set a rumour current in Rome that Christopher and Sergius were traitors to the city, and that the Pope was a prisoner of the Lombards. A hostile crowd gathered about the Lateran, and Christopher and Sergius fled secretly to join the Pope

[1] Some writers falsely say that the ghastly mutilations which were now so commonly practised were learned by the Romans from the Lombards, but Hodgkin, the highest authority, shows that they were copied from the Greeks. On the other hand, we still have a striking memorial of the high position of Lombard art in the fact that the bearded Christ of our statues and pictures is neither Semitic nor Greek, but Lombard.

[2] Duchesne's edition, Vol. I, p. 487.

in St. Peter's. Telling them that they might be able to save themselves by becoming monks, the Pope deserted them and returned to the Lateran; whereupon Afiarta's men dragged them out of St. Peter's and cut out their eyes. Christopher died of the savage mutilation. Sergius was taken to a monastery, beaten, half-strangled with a rope, and, it is said, buried before he died.

We have thus a repulsive exposure of the character of every class in Rome in the eighth century; and we shall find them sink still lower. Nobles like Christopher, who held the most profitable offices in the Papal Court as well as the city and army, seem to have been admitted to the lower orders of the clergy. This would not prevent them from marrying and living as laymen. The whole class was clearly corrupt and brutal, the people supported every act of savagery, and the Pope was callous and unscrupulous. The floral tributes to Stephen's memory which we find in Anastasius, who blames the wicked Lombards for all the crimes—Didier and his accomplished daughter must have looked on with disgust from the Vatican region—tell us plainly enough how worthless are these semi-official descriptions of the character of the Popes from which apologists like Mann compile their works.

We have a further proof that Stephen, however chaste he may have been, had his full share of the pontifical spirit which shrank from no means to recover and secure the rich temporal domains of the Papacy. The sons of Pepin, Carloman and Charles, were both married, but the Lombard King Didier proposed that one of them should put away his wife and marry Didier's daughter Hermingard. The Pope heard this, and he not only composed a letter to Carloman and Charles which exhibits the art of anathema at its ripest, but he laid the letter upon the Tomb of the Apostle and took the Communion over it. The anger it vents is, however, not at the proposal that a Christian monarch should put away his

wife, but that he should for a moment entertain the idea of an alliance with an enemy of the Papacy: the very man with whom the Pope had allied himself in getting rid of Christopher and Sergius. Charles (Charlemagne), who throughout life disdained Church laws about sex and marriage, smiled at the Pope's anathemas and married the Lombard. But at this juncture Stephen died, and we have to see how the greatest and holiest Pope since Gregory I consolidated the Temporal Power, duping Charlemagne himself by the use of one of the most famous forgeries in history.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLEMAGNE AND THE POPES

When, in 1929, Mussolini signed the Treaty with the Vatican which was greeted in England and America as a salutary reunion of the spiritual and the secular powers of Italy, the chief concessions which the Vatican wrested from the reluctant Fascist Government were the political independence of the Vatican territory and a sum of about £19,000,000. This sum represented the compensation which the Italian Government had assigned to the Papacy for the loss of the Papal States in 1870 and the accumulated interest on it. The fact that the inhabitants of those States had voted by an enormous majority for liberation from the Pope's rule and the real infamy of the Pact of 1929 will be considered in later chapters. But the worst feature of the deception of the public ten years ago was the deliberate refusal of our organs of instruction to recall how the Papacy had acquired its Temporal Power. We shall see that the Popes obtained this formidable increase of wealth and prestige by duping illiterate monarchs with a remarkable and unquestioned forgery. Pepin had been induced by a " letter from the Blessed Peter " to settle certain provinces on the Pope. His son Charlemagne was persuaded by one of the most extraordinary of historical forgeries to enlarge and erect them into a kingdom: a kingdom, at least in all but name.

It is material to notice that Hadrian I, who perpetrated this fraud, was, in the Catholic phrase, one of " the best Popes." It illustrates again the historical truth that these did far more harm to the interests of the race than

the more numerous vicious Popes. Hadrian, we are told, came of a " noble " Roman family, received the education of boys of his class, and, on entering the clergy, was conspicuous for the piety and austerity of his life. We have already seen something of the character of the Roman " nobility," and shall see more; while the poor Latin, not free even from grammatical errors, of the Pope's letters shows to what level education had fallen in Rome.

That he was deeply religious no one questions, yet he was one of the line of virtuous Popes who consecrated the maxim that the end justifies the means; and the end which he sought above all others was the Temporal Power. Of his fifty-five extant letters no less than forty-five are querulous and unpleasant appeals to Charlemagne, who was plainly disgusted, about his possessions. Yet few non-Catholic historians would dissent from the terms in which Dean Milman comments on them at the close of the second volume of his *History of Latin Christianity*:—

> Rome, jealous of all temporal sovereignty but its own, yielded up, or rather made, Italy a battlefield of the Transalpine and the stranger, and at the same time so secularized her own spiritual supremacy as to confound altogether the priest and the politician, to degrade absolutely and almost irrevocably the Kingdom of Christ into a Kingdom of this world.

Further—and for this there is not the excuse of pious zeal—it is not disputed that Hadrian introduced into the Papal Court the evil of nepotism, which was the second chief cause of its corruption; and we shall see that the nephews whom he promoted to high office and wealth were brutal and unscrupulous. As in the case of Gregory I and later " great Popes," what I call the official pontifical ambition deformed whatever virtues he possessed.

On the other hand, Charlemagne, who was probably an illegitimate son of Pepin, retained all his life the barbaric robustness he had acquired at his father's rude court. After his visit to Italy he was stimulated by the

Lombard example to try to introduce civilization into his Frankish kingdom, which was in almost as disorderly a condition as we found it in the sixth and seventh centuries, but he was illiterate and profoundly ignorant—a blond barbarian, six and a half feet high, strong enough to fell a horse with his fist—when Hadrian summoned him to Rome. His religion was peculiar. He made serious attempts to reform the appalling morals of his clergy and monks, yet throughout his life he himself took not the slightest notice of the Christian code. He had five wives in succession, a large number of mistresses (four at one time are known), and at least twenty natural children. In his campaign to "convert" the Saxons he perpetrated all the barbarities of his age, and he cut or burned out the eyes of conspirators. All historians now admit that the value of his work has been greatly exaggerated, and that much of it was harmful to social interests. His chief modern biographer, H. W. C. Davis, who is more lenient than critical, admits that he "built no great cities and left no enduring monument of his presence; nor did he, like the Greek, enrich the worlds of art, of literature, or of science."

It is necessary to premise these statements, since history, apart from the little-read works of our experts, is so taught to-day that the names of Charles Martel, Charlemagne, and Hadrian are supposed to stand out luminously in a Dark Age, whereas at the time it was the civilization of the Lombards, the art and culture of Pavia, Milan, Verona, and other fine cities, which commanded the respect of Europe. All Charlemagne's early teachers were Lombards; and the British cleric Alcuin, to whom the entire credit is now usually given, had studied in Lombardy.

This promising and stimulating culture, which might have saved Europe from the two and a half centuries of deeper degradation which were to follow, now received a mortal blow from the covetousness of the Papacy and the ignorance and megalomania of Charlemagne. To its

high social and human value the Popes were so blind that Hadrian's predecessor had, in his letters, called the Lombards "lepers" and "barbarians." "May they be grilled in everlasting hell with the devil and all his angels," he wrote. Hadrian, whose Latin must have amused the learned teachers in the Lombard colleges, was equally blind to the interests of civilization. Shortly before his accession Charlemagne had brutally and wantonly divorced the refined Lombard princess he had married and replaced her by a robustly handsome German girl. King Didier was, therefore, well disposed for an alliance with the Papacy, and he opened negotiations. During the course of these, Charlemagne's elder brother and co-ruler died. His son was his legitimate heir, but Charlemagne seized his inheritance and compelled the widow and her children to fly to Lombardy. When Hadrian refused to make any protest against this violation of the rights of the widow and her son, Didier began again to harass the Papal provinces.

At the Pope's first appeal for help, Charlemagne offered Didier a large sum of money to withdraw his troops and, apparently, to deliver to him Carloman's widow and children. Didier refused, and the Frank army crossed the Alps and, helped by the Pope's secret agents in the Lombard towns, slowly conquered Italy. Holy week occurred during the campaign, and Charlemagne went to spend it in Rome. In silver-edged tunic and blue mantle the blond giant walked the last mile afoot, and he kissed each step of St. Peter's church before he knelt for the Pope's blessing. Every artifice was used to impress the ignorant King. The business conference with him was staged before the awe-inspiring Tomb of St. Peter, and he must have been reduced to the last degree of religious docility in the presence of what he believed to be the remains of the Prince of the Apostles.

The *Pontifical Chronicle* relates that two copies of a treaty were signed, and the Pope's copy was solemnly placed

inside the Tomb of the Apostle; and in describing the territories which Charlemagne assigned to the Papacy in this treaty it includes the greater part of Italy, or all of it except Lombardy in the north and the Greek province in the south. But, apart from the fact that Charlemagne could not write until long afterwards and it is doubtful if he could read, we are told that this copy of the most important treaty a Pope ever signed, entrusted to the most sacred receptacle in Christendom, has been "lost"; and no copy was preserved in France. Moreover, we gather from Hadrian's later letters that several of the provinces named in the *Pontifical Chronicle* were *not* awarded to the Papacy. All that we can say with confidence is that Charlemagne confirmed his father's gift of territory, with the addition of one province.

But there is a more astonishing fraud. During the pontificate of Hadrian certain documents which purported to supply a legal basis for the Papal claim appeared for the first time, and it is the general opinion of historians that the Pope's officers fabricated them in order to forestall any ambition of the Frank to conquer Italy for himself. The most important of these documents is known as the Donation of Constantine, and it is so blatant a forgery that not even the most desperate apologist will break a lance in its defence. It is a quite ridiculous claim that Constantine, when he was driven from Rome, handed over Italy to the Papacy. Catholic writers are content to plead that Hadrian, who must have known enough about the history of Italy and the Papacy in the fourth century to realize how childish this forgery was, did not submit it to Charlemagne. I have, however, pointed out in my *Crises in the History of the Papacy* that in a letter to Charlemagne four years later Hadrian says:—

> Just as in the time of the Blessed Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church was elevated and exalted by the most pious Emperor Constantine the Great, of holy memory, and

> he deigned to bestow upon it power in these western regions.[1]

This is beyond question a reference to the Donation, and it assumes that Charlemagne is acquainted with it. It is ingenuous to suggest that a Papal Court which had by this time forged thousands of lives of saints and martyrs, to say nothing of canons of Councils and the letter of "the Blessed Peter," would shrink from these more profitable fabrications; nor can any other plausible origin of them at this period be imagined. The Temporal Power of the Popes was based upon a lie.

There seem to have been contemporary prelates who recognized and resented the lie. As soon as Charlemagne left Italy, the Archbishop of Ravenna expelled the judges and officers who were sent by the Pope and instructed the entire province—the earlier Exarchate of the Greeks, to which Rome had no title whatever—that he was its ruler. Charlemagne received the Pope's first acrid appeal, but it was not until much later that he compelled the archbishop to yield; for which the Pope rewarded him with valuable marbles and mosaics which he stripped from the Ravenna palace.

Next a son-in-law of King Didier (whom Charlemagne had compelled to enter a monastery) organized a Lombard League against the Pope and tried to draw the Greeks into the alliance. Charlemagne had to come again to Italy to suppress the revolt. In the following year a son of Didier succeeded in getting the help of the Greeks, and there was a widespread rebellion against the rule of the Pope. To the Pope's appeal Charlemagne angrily replied that he was busy, and, to the joy of the Lombards, he committed what the Pope tearfully described as the "unprecedented act" of arresting a Papal Legate for

[1] *Ep.* LX. The reader who would go further into the subject will find a discussion of it, with references to recent literature, in the above work (pp. 86–90). I refrain here from naming on every page the cities and provinces of Italy which changed ownership every few years.

insolence. The trouble was, however, composed by an alliance of Charlemagne with the Greek Empress Irene, the lady who would a few years later cut out the eyes of the son whom she now proposed to wed to Charlemagne's daughter. Hadrian did not live to hear of this ghastly outrage, but his successor Leo III flattered " the most Pious Irene," and Charlemagne asked her hand in marriage. It may be necessary to assure the reader that this vile act of the Empress Irene, from whom so many girls still derive their name, is not in dispute. She was as ruthless and unscrupulous as Theodora of the Brothel.

Hadrian never secured the whole of the territory which he claimed, but he had at least the revenues of nearly half of Italy, since Charlemagne had been persuaded to be content with a vague title which implied only the duty to fight for the Pope's possessions. It is pleasant to add that the Pope's use of this vast new wealth was impersonal, though too much of it was spent upon enriching the churches and too little upon the defence of Rome. The aqueducts, which had so long been in ruin that Rome was as poorly supplied with water as a village, were repaired. New walls were built, and the fever-sodden stretch of the Campagna was to some extent drained and cultivated. But within half a century the gold and other treasures lavished upon St. Peter's would be carried off by an invader because totally inadequate sums had been set aside for defence.

Not less injurious was the Pope's complete indifference to the illiteracy of more than ninety per cent. of the people and the really gross ignorance of the literate minority. Didier had, like Theodoric the Goth, left behind him an accomplished daughter who was eager to develop and protect the high culture of the Lombard cities, where there were elegant and learned writers and colleges of literature, dialectics, and law. Yet thirty years later we shall find the Emperor Lothar, the new ruler of the Lombard provinces, complaining that " teaching is extinct in

all places." Rome had learned from them only the decorative arts—mosaic, tapestry, music, metal-work, etc.—which served to adorn the churches, and these certainly flourished now that the veins of the city were once more flushed with gold. But there was not the least attempt to correct the ignorance which was the chief cause of the general degradation of character.

The doors, and even part of the floor, of St. Peter's were plated with sheets of silver. Massive plates of gold covered the altars, which bore large statues of solid gold and silver. An immense silver chandelier, with 1345 separate lamps, hung from the ceiling and lit all these new splendours and the purple hangings, the tapestries, the mosaics, the rich vestments, and sacred vessels and ornaments, but there was no corresponding intellectual revival. " Homer, Vergil, and Horace," says Milman, " were better known at the Frankish Court than in Rome." If we substitute " Lombard cities " for the Frankish Court, the reproach is profoundly just; though the schools of Lombardy were fast decaying under Papal authority.

At Rome there were a few schools in Benedictine monasteries for the religious training of clerics, and there was what was regarded as a higher school in the Lateran. We shall presently find a Pope ordering the schools of Rome to give secular as well as religious knowledge, and another Pope admitting twenty years later that there are no teachers for such classes. And if any reader is tempted to reflect that the religious instruction given in these schools, however primitive they may have been from a pædagogical point of view, was more likely to promote character than a study of Vergil and Pliny, let me remind him that the nobles, Pope Stephen, Christopher, Sergius, and their followers, whom we saw in the previous chapter behaving like savages, were the choicer pupils of the Lateran school itself; and in a few moments we shall find the next generation of its pupils stooping to the same barbarities.

Let us first complete the story of Hadrian and Charlemagne. The Empress Irene holds her high place in the calendar of the Greek Church, in spite of the murders and mutilations she ordered, because she made an end of the Iconoclast heresy and restored the use of images. Hadrian dreamed of bringing the Greek Church at last under Roman control when he received an invitation from her to preside at an Œcumenical Council of eastern and western prelates. There was, of course, never any question of submission, but he might have restored friendly relations if he had not, in his obsession about the Papal possessions, at once complained that certain territories held by the Greeks must be restored to the Roman Church. This annoyed the Greeks, and, though his Legates presided at the Council, they were prevented from reading part of the Pope's letter, and the Greeks drifted back into a mood of cold disdain which would presently end in a violent and final separation.

It was more painful for Hadrian that these events led to a quarrel with Charlemagne in the course of which that singular champion of sound Church doctrine roundly denounced the Roman Church as at least semi-heretical. The worship (which in Catholic teaching is distinguished from adoration) of statues had already revealed its dangers, and the Frank bishops attempted to restrain it. Charlemagne himself became interested in the question, and he gave his name—he could hardly write even this legibly—to a treatise (the *Caroline Books*) on the subject which his theologians composed. When a copy of this reached Rome, Hadrian was deeply mortified to find that it strongly condemned the practice of his Church. It was an outrage that the Pope should be declared by one of his own subjects, and a layman, to be unsound in theology: it was worse that this condemnation should come from a palace which was notorious for the sexual licence of the monarch and his daughters and nobles. Hadrian was in a painful dilemma. His letter to Charlemagne had to be

temperate, or the Papal States would lose their protector, but Charlemagne took no notice, and his bishops, meeting in synod, endorsed the doctrine of the *Caroline Books* and condemned both the Greek and the Roman practice. This humiliating experience and the knowledge of his failure in the East brought to a close, in 795, the long and strenuous pontificate of Hadrian I.

It is, as we have repeatedly seen, a common practice to select these unquestionably religious Popes like Hadrian and, without even glancing at the actual course of events after their death, declare that they *must* have been a mighty power for good in the life of Europe. The historical truth is that after the death of Hadrian the Papal Court and the Roman nobles reverted to the savagery of the days of Stephen IV, and for this the misconduct of Hadrian himself was largely responsible. I have said on an earlier page that, whether or no we regard pious zeal as a sound excuse for Hadrian's use of fraud and his insatiable greed for territory, it does not in the least condone his promotion of nephews whose vile character, we shall soon realize, cannot possibly have been hidden from him.

These nephews, Paschalis and Campulus, belonged, like Hadrian himself, to what was regarded as the leading family of the Roman nobility. They were specially trained in the Lateran school and were promoted to the highest offices in the Papal service. Harsh, domineering, and greedy, they were generally disliked outside their own circle, and when Hadrian died the electors chose Leo III, who was not friendly to them, before they had time to act. Leo hastened to send the golden keys of the Tomb of St. Peter to Charlemagne and asked him to appoint a representative at the Papal Court. He sent a German abbot, and doubtless this man's presence helped to check Paschalis and Campulus, who remained in office, for several years. But the nobles saw with increasing anger how the more lucrative posts were kept in the hands

of the clergy, and in the year 799 they concerted an appalling plot.

On the Feast of St. Mark, April 25, when the spring is well advanced in Central Italy, it was customary to have an imposing religious procession through the streets, the Pope riding on horseback amid his higher clergy and the nobles. We often read how healthy it must have been for Rome that these pious demonstrations were substituted for the light gaiety of the old Floralia and Lupercalia, but such savagery as they repeatedly witnessed in the Dark Age would have seemed to the ancient pagans impossible. Paschalis and Campulus rode with the Pope, but they had posted a body of armed men in a monastery on the route, and these fell upon the procession with drawn swords. They dragged the Pope from his horse and began in the street to cut out his eyes and tongue. According to some of the chronicles they did cut out his eyes, and his sight was later restored by a miracle. But the correct reading of the best contemporary account [1] seems to be that, while most of the nobles were in the plot, the people took the Pope's side and drove off the assassins before they could complete the horrid mutilation. The nobles then seem to have rallied, for Paschalis and Campulus returned to the spot where the Pope lay bleeding on the street, dragged him into the monastery, and beat him severely. At night, however, while fighting and looting occupied the combatants, the Pope's Chamberlain forced his way with a few men into the monastery. They lowered the Pope from the walls with ropes and took him to St. Peter's; and the Duke of Spoleto, hastily summoned to Rome with a troop of horse, conveyed him to his capital.

Charlemagne refused to come to Rome, but he had the Pope brought to him at Paderborn, and seems to have accepted his story and sent him back to Rome under protection. He soon, however, received from the Roman

[1] In Abbot Eginhard's *Life of Charlemagne* (in the Migne Collection).

nobles an indictment of Leo which, like so many indictments of Popes by their subjects, has "not been preserved." From a letter of Alcuin we learn that it "impeached the Pope's morals," and we know that it charged him with gross unfairness in the administration of the Papal finances. The Emperor sent ten prelates and nobles of high rank to watch the trial of the Pope at Rome, but again the proceedings of the trial have been "lost." It seems that the bishops left the final decision to the Emperor, who was to come to Rome for the Christmas ceremonies of the year 800. On December 1 Charlemagne, now in ancient Roman dress, sat in the sanctuary of St. Peter's surrounded by a colourful throng of Frank and Roman prelates, abbots, and nobles, while the people and the soldiers filled the body of the church. He decided that the charge was not proved—we shall see later that the charge of corrupt administration was certainly sound—and he condemned Paschalis and Campulus to death; though, to conciliate the nobility, the Pope persuaded him to change the sentence to exile. The Pope solemnly swore on the Gospels that he was not guilty, and the affair was closed.

At the end of the Mass on Christmas Day the Pope dramatically produced a crown and a purple mantle and made Charlemagne Roman Emperor. Most of the chroniclers describe the event as filling the great congregation with surprise and then wild rejoicing, and some historians believe that the Pope, secretly informed that the Frank intended himself to restore the old Empire, forestalled him by making the dignity a gift of the Papacy. The best witness, Eginhard, Charlemagne's secretary, says that the Emperor was annoyed, and declared that he would not have attended the ceremony if he had known the Pope's design.

Whatever be the true explanation, the historians who describe the event as a notable step in the restoration of civilization in Europe are again false to the historical

facts. Gregorovius, the leading authority on the history of medieval Rome, says at this point:—

> The whole history of the human race affords no example of a struggle of such long duration, or one so unchanged in motive, as the struggle of the Romans and Italians against the Temporal Power of the Popes, whose kingdom ought not to have been of this world.

We have seen the beginning of the evil, and we shall find the Papacy sinking to a lower level than ever. And when the struggle for the imperial purple was added to this strife over the Papal States, the danger to civilization in so violent a world was immeasurably increased. It is one of the most notorious facts of the history of the ninth century that after the death of Charlemagne the new Empire was rent and degraded by sordid quarrels, the Church was deeply corrupted, the entire country thoroughly demoralized; and it is the most notorious fact of the tenth century that the Papacy sank, and remained, so low that distinguished Catholic historians have called the period "The Reign of the Whores."

Leo used the vast wealth which now poured into Rome for building and enriching churches and monasteries. As long as Charlemagne lived, immense wealth came to Rome from France and Germany; and England and other countries began to send a large annual sum which was called Peter's Pence. At this time, too, pilgrimages to the Roman churches and their priceless relics multiplied, to the great profit of the Papal treasury. The Pope's dominions were tranquil and prosperous under the protection of the Frank and sent in rich revenues. It was still not enough for the Pope's plans, and he laid excessive taxes upon the richer Romans and confiscated their estates as soon as they vented their anger. When Charlemagne died, two years before Pope Leo, the nobles plotted to murder the Pope, and, when Leo crushed the revolt with a truculence which scandalized the new Emperor, Louis the Pious, they passed to the country

and raised large armed forces which burned the Pope's farms and threatened Rome itself.

The next Pope, Stephen, was more conciliatory, but he lasted little more than a year, and Paschal I entered upon his short and stormy pontificate. The Emperor Louis had made his eldest son, Lothar, King of Italy, and Lothar was no docile son of the Church. When he decided against the Pope, who had claimed a rich abbey, the Roman nobles were encouraged to rebel once more, and the revolt was crushed with more than the usual severity. Two of the highest officials of the Papal Court and a number of other distinguished nobles and clerics were blinded and then beheaded in the Pope's palace. " There were some," says Eginhard, " who said that this was done by the command or advice of Pope Paschal." Few historians doubt it. Lothar sent judges to Rome to ascertain the truth, and the Pope refused to be examined by them. His explanation strengthened the suspicion of his guilt. There had been no murders, he said, but just a few executions of traitors; and he was so little believed when he went through the comedy of " purging " himself by a solemn oath of his innocence that after his death in the following year the Romans refused to have him buried in St. Peter's.

The death of Paschal in 821 stimulated the party of the nobles to make a supreme effort. The Emperor Louis and his son Lothar, King of Italy, were disposed to check the excessive Papal pretensions and support the nobles, while most of the clergy and the ignorant mass of the people resented the interference of the Frank monarchs. There were thus bitterly hostile factions, the Imperialists and the Papalists, but the Imperialists seem to have carried the election without the murderous conflicts which now occurred so frequently and secured a Pope, Eugenius II, who was favourable to them.

The apologist who tells his readers how in 826 Eugenius ordered all the bishops in Italy to open schools for

teaching " the liberal arts " as well as religion does not explain that Rome had for a short time been reformed by the King of Italy, nor that a later Pope admits that no teachers of the liberal arts—which at that time meant merely Latin grammar and a study of the half-dozen classical works which had survived the wreck of the ancient literature—were available. In the previous year, 825, King Lothar had issued a decree on education, in which he said, possibly with an eye to Rome, that " teaching is, through the neglect and laziness of the authorities, totally extinct in all places." He had, in fact, to open schools of an elementary type in the cities which had been famous for their culture before the Pope had brought upon them the destructive forces of the Franks.

The Pope's call for schools was part of a general scheme of secular, indeed anti-clerical, reform which the nobles and the representatives of King Lothar, who came to Rome, carried out. The gross abuses and the clerical monopoly of lucrative offices which Hadrian and his successors had introduced were severely condemned. Corrupt judges and other civic officials whom they had put in office were discharged. Estates which the Church had confiscated had to be restored to their owners. The entire Papal administration, which was foul with corruption, was reformed, and Lothar forced upon the Papacy a civic constitution, of which he had a copy fastened to the gate of the Vatican house. The temporal dominion of the Pope was recognized, but Legates of the Emperor were to live in Rome and send to him frequent reports on the conduct of the Pope's officials and to ratify all elections. In case of serious differences an appeal might be made to the Emperor as the supreme authority.[1]

Such pages of medieval history as this are ignored by

[1] Lothar's decree is in Mansi's *Sacrorum Conciliorum Collectio*, year 814. The (monastic) *Bertinian Annals* observes that Lothar " reformed the condition of the Roman people, which had become very bad owing to the perversity of certain rulers." Effectively their only rulers were the Popes.

the writers who represent "great Popes" like Hadrian as a fine constructive force, saving what remained of European civilization from complete wreck and leading the nations onward toward recovery. These statements are flagrantly opposed to the historical facts. The "barbarians" were responsible for every serious constructive effort, and the Popes ruined their work. Hadrian destroyed the fine and advancing culture of the Lombard cities, and the theocratic system which he and Charlemagne substituted for it became in less than twenty years repellent with corruption and inefficiency; just as we shall find it in its last phase during the first half of the nineteenth century. Now a Frank monarch, Lothar, only two generations removed from barbarism, stimulated, not by any Papal counsels but by the remains of the anti-Papal Lombard culture, sets out to restore the social ideals which the Popes have destroyed. Lothar was neither a genius nor a man of high character, but he brought back Rome and Italy to the progressive path. Unfortunately, the unsound work of Charlemagne in his own Empire now began to reveal its evil consequences, and the protection of the Franks was withdrawn from Italy, or was fatally weakened, just when a new enemy appeared.

CHAPTER V

FORGING NEW TITLE-DEEDS

THE new Roman Empire which Charlemagne had created stretched from Western France to Saxony, from Denmark to Southern Italy. His attempt to invade and annex Spain, which was in the hands of the Arabs, had been an ignominious failure; and Russia and Prussia still lay beyond the frontiers of civilization. Too many historians repeat the conventional opinion that this creation of a large Empire and the admission of the spiritual powers to a share in governing it were long steps in the direction of a restoration of civilization. One smiles, for instance, at the fervour with which Alison Phillips greets it, in the article on France in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, as an " early renaissance after centuries of barbarism and ignorance." All this rhetoric is outweighed by the plain historical fact that the restoration of civilization did not begin until more than two centuries later, and that in most countries, especially Italy, still lower depths of barbarism and ignorance were to be reached. The creation of the Empire led to centuries of savage warfare in which character was further degraded. Some of the royal personages involved in these wars and other horrors enter vitally into our story of the Popes and, although I here avoid as far as possible the academic virtue, and educational vice, of studding my pages with uncouth names and dates, it will be useful to premise a general explanation.

Charlemagne, the hero of a hundred love-stories and scurrilous legends in the Middle Ages, left behind him only one legitimate son, Louis the Pious, and a nephew,

Bernard, whom he made King of Italy. Bernard rebelled, and Louis the Pious—he was, in fact, very devout and chaste—had his eyes cut out, and so brutally that he died. Louis had three sons: Lothar, whom he destined for the imperial title and the Kingdom of Italy; Pepin, who died before his father; and Louis, who was to have Germany. But in advanced years the pietist, losing his wife, married a beautiful and fascinating German girl, Judith, and, when she bore him a boy, the future Charles the Bald, she and her doting husband set out to make at whatever cost some principality for him out of the Empire.

We need not here follow all the plans and bitter quarrels that ensued. It is enough that in 833 the three elder sons took the field against their father, and one of the most sordid pages of that sordid time tells how Louis the Pious, in a hair-shirt, knelt before all the nobles and prelates of France and Germany in the chief church of Compiègne and signed a confession that he had been guilty of sacrilege, treason, and murder: which was a lie in three chapters. The charge of adultery against the fascinating Judith was probably sound.

Historians leave it open whether the great prelates of France and Germany acted upon the counsel of Pope Gregory IV in this shameless desertion and vile treatment of their sovereign and their most generous benefactor, but we have reached an age when prelates did not take such momentous steps without consulting the Pope; and it was to the Pope's interest to conciliate the eldest son, Lothar, who was King of Italy. Thus the spiritual powers which were henceforward to direct the secular forces and curb the passions of princes and nobles monstrously betrayed their ideals, in their own material interest, within twenty years of the death of Charlemagne.

In all the wars, civil wars, and rebellions which filled the next hundred years and thoroughly demoralized France and Germany the Popes counted for little. We

shall find the greatest Pope of the period, Nicholas I, moving heaven and earth to punish a royal love-affair while the Empire, broken into warring fragments, rapidly decays. The western half of it, which now definitely becomes France, under Charles the Bald, began to suffer from the Norman invasions, which compelled it to weaken its forces in Italy. In the confusion the dukes (military leaders) who had governed various provinces of Italy for the Emperor were encouraged to set up independent principalities and add materially to the deepening disorder of the times.

While the forces which are so often represented as reconstructing civilization in Europe were thus absorbed in the savage destructiveness which was an inevitable result of the work of Charlemagne, the Papacy encountered a new and more terrible danger in the south. How the Arabs had by the middle of the ninth century created a chain of brilliant civilizations which stretched from Spain almost to India I have described in my *Splendour of Moorish Spain* (1935). We shall see something about it in the next book. The weakest link of this chain was that which more or less connected Spain with Syria and Egypt across North Africa. Here a comparatively narrow fringe of good land and towns had a broad background of desert life in which the crudest and most violent fanaticism was apt in all ages to spread like fire on a prairie, constantly destroying the efforts of the few Arabs who cared to settle there. These African Muslim were the real Moors, whose name, with its suggestion of semi-savagery, has wrongly been given to the Spanish Arabs. To the Romans, who were too ignorant to know anything about the high Arab civilization of Spain, they were known as " the Saracens " or Easterners, though there were few real Saracens (Syrians and Arabs) amongst them.

It was but a day's sail from what we now call Tunisia to Sicily, and the Saracen sailors soon discovered that a

degenerate remnant of the Greeks lived there amid the marble palaces and faded opulence of the older Sicilian civilization. There is a story that they were invited to invade the island by a Greek officer who had, in the fashion of the time, had his nose cut off for violating a nun. However that may be, the African Muslim overran Sicily and began to venture up the coasts of Italy and make raids into the interior while they were still in their condition of semi-barbarous fanaticism. Within a hundred years they, being cut off from the desert reservoirs of fierce fanatics, would develop the same genial scepticism as in Spain, Syria, and Persia, and would create a fine civilization in Sicily, but in the ninth century the sight of Christian institutions goaded them to savagery. They emasculated the monks and used to lay the nuns upon the altars of their chapels for outrage. Churches, vestments, and sacred vessels were defiled in the most odious ways. The news passed on to Rome that legions of devils were sweeping over South Italy and making for the rich churches of Rome.

The story of the Popes for the next thirty years contains little more than the struggle against the Saracens. From the death of Hadrian in 827 to 846 there is almost a blank record; although Pope Gregory IV ruled for seventeen years. At his death there was one of the familiar election brawls, and, as the new Pope Sergius II made the disorder of the times an excuse for not announcing his accession to the Emperor Lothar, the young King of Italy, Louis II, was sent to punish his northern provinces. The Pope disarmed and crowned Louis, but he would not surrender to that monarch's ambitions in Italy, and the Frank left him to the mercy of the Saracens. Their fleets took and sacked the ports, Ostia and Portus, and sailed up the Tiber as far as Rome.

The human aspect of the piety, or the clerical ambition, which had spent vast sums in enriching the churches and nothing on the defence of such churches as were not

enclosed within the old city-walls, was now painfully disclosed. The Vatican region had become the most sacred and most richly endowed area in Europe, and it lay wide open to the invaders. St. Peter's and the other churches of this district were very thoroughly sacked and defiled. From the wall across the river the Romans saw the Africans tear the silver plates from the doors and bring out the thick plates of gold which had covered the altars. The golden High Altar was broken up and carried away to the ships. The solid gold statues, the gold and silver crosses, often containing priceless relics, the silks and tapestries and precious stones were taken from every church. The soldiers even broke into the alleged Tomb of the Apostle and smashed the large bronze casket which contained the bones that had been imposed upon Europe as the bones of Peter. A zealous Catholic noble in the north at last led a Lombard army and drove off the Saracens, but it was too late to save the sacred treasures.

Sergius died in the following year, and a strong and sensible Pope, Leo IV, occupied the throne for eight years. The public has become familiar in recent years with the phrase " the Leonine City," or the area across the Tiber which is now the Vatican City. This was the Leo who first had the secular sagacity to enclose it within stout walls and enable it to defy the Saracens. Other buildings arose in the area, and the house which the Popes had had in connection with St Peter's—they lived habitually, of course, in the Lateran Palace on the other side of the city—became a modest Vatican Palace. St. Peter's and the other churches were re-furnished with a sumptuousness which leads Gregorovius to estimate that the Roman treasury at this time was richer than in the days of Leo X: the Renaissance Pope who spent, mostly on his own pleasures, more than £2,000,000 in a few years. The new High Altar of St. Peter's was plated with gold—not merely gilded, for we read of one plate weighing 216 pounds—and decorated with jewels and enamels.

A silver ciborium weighed 1606 pounds: a golden cross, studded with jewels, weighed 1000 pounds. And statues, lamps, altar-vessels, and tapestries were strewn everywhere. Whence did they come? The Saracens had sold them back to Rome through the Greeks and the Venetians.

Leo had the walls and towers of the city repaired, and he went down to Ostia on the coast and blessed the fleet, which beat the Saracens at sea and brought home many captives to help in repairing the damage they had done. Many towns and ports were rebuilt. Louis II came to be crowned in the new St. Peter's in 850, and for a time he helped in the war against the Saracens. He soon retired, and the Romans complained bitterly of the uselessness of their Protector. The Pope was denounced to the Emperor, who came to Rome in a rage and held a trial in the Vatican Palace. Leo was absolved, though corruption amongst his clerical officials was disclosed; and he died a few days later.

Ironically enough, it is at the close of this vigorous pontificate that the mythical Pope Joan is placed by a late medieval legend. A beautiful English girl, the story ran, entered a monastery in male dress in order to be near her lover. Coming to Rome, she made so deep an impression by her learning that at the death of Leo in 855 they made her Pope and did not discover her sex until she was seized with the pains of child-birth while she rode in a religious procession. After that, the legend said, the higher clergy verified the sex of every Pope before he was consecrated. This absurd story, a product of the frivolous eroticism of Renaissance days—it is not found before the fifteenth century—was so widely accepted in Italy as fact for two centuries that a portrait of Joan was included in the series of portraits of Popes in the great cathedral of Siena.

There is, in sober history, no doubt about what happened at the death of Leo. The wealth of the Papacy

led to another sordid quarrel for the prize. Benedict III was elected, but a " cardinal " priest (or priest of one of the leading or cardinal churches), Anastasius, who had been deposed and banished by Leo for improper conduct, bribed the Imperial Legates to announce to the Emperor that he had been elected. They did so and, when they returned toward Rome, Anastasius joined them. When envoys of Benedict came out to meet the party, he had them put in irons. A large number of both Frank and Roman nobles and the clergy joined them, and they forced their way into St. Peter's. Leo had hung on the wall a painting of the synod condemning Anastasius, and he made short work of this with an axe and then, for some obscure reason, started upon the religious statues and pictures. Behind all the gossipy stories we see the long-standing feud of Imperialists and Papalists.

Anastasius and his friends rode across the city to the Lateran to deal with his rival. Benedict sat on his throne in the Lateran church, and a bishop, at the head of a troop of armed men, dragged him from the throne, stripped him of the Papal robes, and packed him off to a monastery. But the people and lower clergy who supported Benedict had met in a church, and they refused to yield when soldiers, sword in hand, were sent in to them. They were evidently the great majority of the people and clergy, and in the end the Imperialists had to sacrifice Anastasius, who was sent back into exile. For three years Benedict sustained the work of building and decorating churches, and he then made way for one of the " great Popes," Nicholas I (858–867).

Nicholas, an exceptionally handsome, strong, and imperious member of a noble family, is described as a man of great learning and deep religious sentiment. Since Leo IV had admitted in 853 that he could not find teachers of any but religious knowledge, we do not need to examine his learning. The Latin of his many letters is correct and elementary. His virtue, in sexual

respects, and piety no one will question. Royal sinners were no longer flattered. They were flayed with anathemas, until the strongest monarchs trembled or cursed at the approach of his Legates. In him the pontifical conception reached a height which even Gregory VII and Innocent III would not transcend. He was "divinely inspired," and his voice was the voice of God (*Epp.*, LXXXIII, XCII, etc.). He was "prince over all the earth" (LXV) and had to smite offenders "in every part of the world." Kings, who had the very inferior job of ruling men's bodies, must take their swords and sceptres from him (LXXIX). Any prelate who hesitated to obey him must be deposed at once (VI). Not a church must be built anywhere "without the commands of the Pope" (CXXXV), and not a book of any importance must be written unless he has authorized it (CXV).[1] No Pope was better fitted than Nicholas to discharge the function of preserver of civilization which historical writers now so freely ascribe to the "great Popes."

Yet we again find, as we have found a score of times and shall find a further score of times, that this rhetorical or ethical-sentimental philosophy of history is sheer nonsense. Within ten years of the death of Nicholas the Papacy entered upon corrupt ways which culminated in a century of degradation that has no parallel in the history of religion. That is the best-known fact of the history of the time. The second most notorous fact is that European Christendom generally sank in the same period to its lowest moral depth. The one region for which exception is claimed is Saxony (for a time), which we will consider later; yet, when the King of Saxony sent a delegation to the court of the Arab ruler in Spain, it was regarded by the highly civilized Arabs with much the same

[1] I translate these quotations from the Migne edition of his letters. The reader who would study his ideas further should consult Dr. A. Greinacher's *Die Anschauungen des Papsts Nikolaus I über das Verhältniss von Staat und Kirche* (1909).

patronizing politeness as that with which we now receive delegations from African kings or chiefs, and its members behaved like rustics amid the splendours of Cordova.

There is not the least need for any subtle analysis of the failure of Pope Nicholas to bring about any social regeneration. He, like the other outstanding Popes, never sought to accomplish this. Sexual vice he certainly denounced, and in the case of some high-placed offenders punished severely; but it was not this that hindered the restoration of civilization, nor did the Pope impose more than a few years' reluctant restraint upon the higher clergy and princes. He insisted upon justice, but within certain narrow limits and rather to give proof of his power; for to the appalling injustice of the social order he was completely indifferent. But it is enough to say that he was so religious and so wholly absorbed in Church matters that he despised all considerations of secular and human welfare. A short account of the chief incidents of his career will show this.

Some time after his accession Nicholas received a delegation from Constantinople. The Greeks presented him with a superb set of jewelled altar vessels and asked him to approve the elevation of Photius, with the Emperor's full consent, to the archbishopric of Constantinople. To what extent Nicholas understood the new situation in the East we do not know. It was piquant. On the Byzantine throne was a young Emperor who is known in history as Michael the Drunkard. His mother Theodora is, like the Irene to whom I previously referred, a saint in the calendar of the Greek Church; and, while Irene had blinded her son so as to keep power, chiefly for religious reasons, in her own hands, Theodora had with the same object entrusted her son's education to her brother Bardas, who taught him that a princely dissipation was the proper function of monarchs. They had in time made a nun of the Empress-mother, and Michael and his favourite mistress and his uncle now

jovially ruled the palace. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Ignatius, a religious monk, was indiscreet enough to protest when they filled the palace with orgies which rivalled those of Nero and Commodus—were worse, indeed, for they included obscene parodies of the Mass in their revels—and even rode the streets on asses in the vestments of bishops, bawling indecent and blasphemous cries. They had deposed Ignatius, and had chosen as his successor one of the most learned, and apparently most complaisant, men in Constantinople, Photius.

The situation at the dismissal of the Patriarch must have been known in Rome, and the Pope's letters well illustrate the limits of his idea of justice. He at once replied (*Ep.* IV) that he would send Legates to make an inquiry, but he rebuked the Emperor's "presumptuous temerity" in deposing Ignatius without the Pope's permission, and reminded him that the Greeks still held some of the Papal possessions. The Legates reached Constantinople, and they were, as so often happened, corrupted by the Greeks and supported Photius. Ignatius, however, who had been imprisoned and vilely tortured to compel him to resign, got a message to the Pope, and he shot anathemas at the whole group at Constantinople, including his Legates.

When the Emperor replied with a contemptuous letter, Nicholas wrote to say that if he did not withdraw the letter, he would "commit it to eternal perdition, in a great fire, and so bring the Emperor into contempt with all nations." Whereupon Photius, to the Pope's stupefaction, drew up and sent to Rome a list of the heresies of the Latin Church which compelled him to excommunicate it and its Pope! It is said that Michael was drunk when he signed it. The heresies were dreadful practices like fasting on Saturdays, eating cheese in Lent, compelling priests to shave and forbidding them to marry, etc., and the inclusion in the Latin creed of a statement that the Holy Ghost "proceeds" from both the Father

and the Son: which monstrous error is really the one doctrinal difference between the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Church. I need not further pursue the long quarrel. Nicholas's successor recognized Photius, who was twice deposed and recalled, but the struggle with Nicholas, who was fully justified in principle, had hardened the hostility between the two Churches, and they made no further approach to each other for five or six centuries.

Of much greater interest is the quarrel with Lothar II, King of Lorraine and brother of the Emperor. Looseness of life remained quite common among the nobles and prelates of France and Germany, and few Popes or bishops troubled to interfere, but Nicholas fell upon it with a fiery anger. In 860 we find him writing to the Archbishop of Rheims, the greatest prelate in France and probably the most accomplished man in Europe, ordering him in the most peremptory terms to excommunicate Ingeltrude, Countess of Burgundy, unless she at once abandons her licentious vagabondage and returns to her husband. She was a lady of mature years, for Nicholas's predecessor, Benedict III, gives us (*Ep.* II) a long and weird account of the vices of her son Hubert, Abbot of St. Maurice, who, it seems, went about France with a troupe of mistresses and desecrated monasteries and nunneries with their nocturnal orgies when the day's hunt was over.

Hubert's sister Theutberga, who seems to have been as cold as her consecrated brother was passionate, was married to Lothar. He had as mistress a certain Waldrada, who was a woman of quite exceptional charm, since she, we shall see, seduced the most arrogant of the Pope's Legates. Whether Lothar was sincerely concerned about the sterility of his wife—certainly two royal uncles waited cynically to divide his kingdom if he died without an heir—or was merely moved by his passion for Waldrada is not clear, but his procedure had all the

grossness of his age. He accused his wife of incest with her abbot-brother and of procuring abortion. She demanded the ordeal by boiling water, and, when her champion passed this, she had to be reinstated. She was, however, so harshly treated in the palace that she, in despair, falsely confessed that she was guilty, and a synod of the leading French and German bishops dissolved her marriage and declared Waldrada queen: which was another gross dereliction of their duty.[1]

Theutberga seemed content to retire to a nunnery, and, as we are told that she now appealed to the Pope, we may safely infer that she did so at his command. The extraordinary story that follows usually reads like the heroic campaign of the Pope to secure her rights for an injured woman, but there are other aspects of it. From the peculiar form of the charge of incest, which cannot be described here as the Archbishop of Rheims describes it, and from a later statement of Theutberga herself there is good reason to believe that she had a sexual abnormality; and, on the other hand, we must remember that there was at this time no Church law forbidding divorce. Indissolubility was the clerical ideal and often enforced, but divorce continued in most countries until the eleventh century. One is justified in thinking that Nicholas chiefly saw in the trouble a new opportunity to assert his supreme power. That he believed this to be for the good of the world we may admit, but it was a fanatical churchman's conception of the good of the world. Socially and morally Nicholas, like Gregory VII, left the world worse than he found it. But the facts themselves will show that this is a correct interpretation of his conduct.

The Pope ordered the northern prelates to hold a synod at Metz, to which he would send Legates, and he notified King Lothar that he would be excommunicated if he did

[1] The whole story is told by Archbishop Hincmar, very realistically, in his treatise *De Divortio Lothari* (Migne, Vol. CXXV, Col. 625 and foll.).

not present himself at it for examination. The Legates were, as usual, bribed or cajoled, and the synod declared in favour of Lothar; and two of the leading archbishops, Günther of Cologne and Theutand of Trèves, were sent to Rome to announce and explain the decision to the Pope. Theutand was a prelate of strict life, though a supporter of Lothar, and both were well calculated to impress Rome with the dignity and power of the Frank Church and the Frank princes.

But they did not yet know Nicholas I. He kept them waiting for three weeks, then summoned them before a synod and, refusing to listen to them, deposed and excommunicated them and their brother-bishops and declared the decisions of their synod void. The archbishop hastened to tell the Emperor at Benevento how the Pope had insulted him, his brother, and the Frank Church, and Emperor Louis led an army to Rome and from the Vatican Palace angrily demanded satisfaction. Nicholas shut himself in the Lateran Palace in the city and ordered fasts and religious processions. When one of these processions, bearing at its head an immense crucifix in which was embodied one of the thousands of fragments of " the true cross," crossed the bridge and approached St. Peter's, the Emperor's men fell furiously upon it. To the horror of the Romans they broke the precious cross, tore up the banners, and beat some of the clergy. This sacrilege seems to have disquieted the Emperor, and he permitted his devout wife to mediate. The archbishops were sent back to Germany, though the Pope refused to lift the ban, and the Emperor was superficially reconciled.

But the Frank prelates, who had thought this an excellent opportunity to check the new Papal pretensions, were angry. They wrote a scornful letter, we are told in the Annals of Hincmar, about this Pope who " professes to be Emperor of the whole world " and excommunicated him; and Archbishop Günther sent his brother, a priest, to lay a copy of the decree of excommunication upon the

new Tomb of the Apostle. With a troop of soldiers the priest cut his way through the guards, threw the anathema upon the tomb, and cut his way out again. The Emperor still lived next door, in the Vatican Palace, and, when he did not interfere, his soldiers invaded Rome, looting the richer houses and outraging nuns and matrons of Papalist families. Nicholas was, however, saved by one of those accidents of the time which were so profitable to the clergy. The Emperor fell ill and moved to Ravenna, and some of the aggressors died. It was early spring, and the malarial mosquitoes were moving in from the marshes. But in such an age the fever was clearly seen to be due to the hand of God. Nicholas probably believed this as sincerely as any.

The Pope prepared a sheaf of anathemas and sent one of the most arrogant of his Legates, Arsenius, with them to Lorraine. We shall see in the sequel that this cleric-noble was not really a religious man, but he handled the heaviest anathemas with ease. He even spared one for an unknown thief who had stolen some of his money. Lothar was alarmed when his clergy submitted, and he declared himself penitent. Archbishop Günther was deposed; Abbot Hubert was murdered in one of his adventures; Queen Theutberga sought refuge with her royal brother Charles; and Charles and Louis advised Lothar to go to Rome and kneel at the feet of the Pope. But Nicholas was not satisfied. " It does not matter what *you* say," he wrote to the monarchs; " *we* say what is divinely revealed to us." The Legate must visit them and brandish his anathemas; and Lothar must take back Theutberga whether she wishes or not. She was sent back to Lorraine, and in the presence of the Legate and his bishops, twelve nobles swore on behalf of Lothar that her conjugal rights (which all the prelates of France had sworn she was incapable of enjoying) would be restored. Then the Legate set out for Rome with the siren Waldrada a captive in his train, and we are told that she " escaped "

and went back to France; in explanation of which remarkable feat, as it was in such an age, we have merely a hint that Bishop Arsenius was very fond of gold.

Two years later the Pope heard that Lothar was not keeping his promise and was secretly still cherishing Waldrada. The Archbishop of Metz made an inquiry for him and reported that Lothar " cheerfully gave her her conjugal rights." The Pope did not believe him, and he prepared for more drastic action. When Theutberga wrote imploring him to let her enter a nunnery and hinted that she had a physical defect which unfitted her for marriage, he told her that she must continue to bear her martyrdom. His action may have been morally heroic: socially it was inhuman and disastrous, making men despise their spiritual authority and preparing a sordid reaction. But Nicholas died before he could take further action, and Lothar, who fought for his mistress to the end, died soon afterwards. It is not easy to understand how this ethical intransigence is so valuable to the social welfare when for five years passion, bitterness, and crime of all kind are let loose over half of Europe rather than that a prince shall have some alleviation when a repulsive wife has been imposed upon him in youth for political reasons.

There is another aspect of the work of Pope Nicholas which illustrates the un-social character of his lofty moral code and helps to explain why all his severity left no trace whatever in the life of Europe. All historians, even Catholic, are agreed that it was during his pontificate that an extraordinary series of forgeries which are known as the Isidorean or Pseudo-Isidorean or Forged Decretals made their first appearance. This is a collection of hundreds of letters of Popes and decrees of councils from the first century onward, the vast majority of which are acknowledged to be sheer fabrications, and very few (and these of the least importance) of the remainder are

not falsified. The forgery is so crass and blatant that even in the fifteenth century Catholic scholars began to complain of it.

The object of the forgery is to show that from the earliest period of Christian history the Church (the clergy) was admitted to be above the State, and that the supremacy of the Roman Pope was acknowledged. But the authority of the Pope over other bishops is evidently stressed with the main object of justifying priests in appealing to Rome against their bishops and bishops appealing against their archbishops or councils. For this reason it is generally acknowledged that the forgeries were made, not at Rome or in the interest of the Popes, but in France and in the interest of the lower clergy or the bishops. The only question that concerns us here is, therefore, whether Nicholas knew and made use of the forgeries, as his successors admittedly did. He certainly used them.

The documents were probably forged in the archdiocese of Rheims. The archbishop, Ebbo, had taken a leading part in the disgraceful trial of Louis I and had, when that monarch was restored, been deposed and replaced by the learned Hincmar. The new archbishop held that ordinations of priests and consecrations of bishops by Ebbo were invalid, and this threw out of office a body of very spirited rebels. It seems most probable that these fabricated the Decretals as a basis for an appeal to the Pope against Hincmar.

The leader of the rebels was a Bishop Rothrad, in degrading whom Hincmar does not exhibit a very strict integrity. Rothrad was forbidden by the King to appeal to Rome and was sent to a monastery, but he succeeded in sending an appeal. Nicholas wrote to Hincmar and the King in the harshest and most arrogant terms and demanded the presence of Rothrad in Rome. He reinstated him without any serious examination and sent him back with a letter to Hincmar, in the course of which he says (*Ep.* LXXV):—

> Even if he had not appealed to the Apostolic See, you had no right to run counter to so many and such important decretal statutes and depose a bishop without consulting us.

That he is here referring to the False Decretals, of which Rothrad had probably brought a copy to Rome, is clear; and this is confirmed by the sequel. The French bishops replied that they had no such decretals—there were none except in the forged collection—and Nicholas replied that Hincmar used these decretals himself when it served his purpose—which is true—and that these letters of Popes written even in " the times of the pagan persecutions " are to be respected.

Catholic writers like Jules Roy (*Saint Nicholas*, 1901), whom Mann follows, while trying to limit severely the Pope's reliance on the Isidorean Decretals, admit that he did quote spurious documents and that he gave an improper extension to genuine documents; as when he appeals to a law that no church can be built or bishop deposed or important book written without his consent.[1] His whole conception of his power, as I summarized it at the beginning of this chapter, rested upon forged claims no less than his Temporal Power did. For the Pope held that these had always been the acknowledged powers and rights of the Papacy, and the story of its development. which we have followed, shows that this is so false that a priest so well trained as Nicholas was in ecclesiastical matters cannot possibly have believed it. He added new and massive stones to the fraudulent foundations of the Papacy. The end justified the means.

Apart from a few disinterested acts like his generosity to the poor at Rome,[2] these incidents I have given are

[1] For a more candid and exhaustive study of Nicholas's use of forgeries see J. Richterich, *Papst Nikolaus I* (1903). The Pope's false interpretation of documents is, of course, just as truly forgery as fabricating a decree is.

[2] In connection with his distribution of food to the workers on certain days we have a curious illustration of the crass general ignorance. The Roman people, all of whom in pagan days had been taught to read and write, now had to use strings of nut-shells to remind them of the days of free food.

typical. In my *Crises in the History of the Papacy* I wrongly gave as an instance of his impartial sense of justice that, at the very time when he was quarrelling with Hincmar, he strongly supported that prelate in objecting to the consecration as bishop of a priest whom Hincmar thought unworthy. Covering the ground more minutely in later years, however, I realized that this priest, Hilduin, was the brother of Archbishop Günther, who had cut his way to the Tomb of the Apostle and flung a curse of the Pope upon it! In any case it is, as I said, futile to argue about the effect upon Europe of his insistence upon virtue and justice. His harshness and his false glorification of the Papal power engendered an immediate reaction. His anathemas were shed as lightly as the winter's robes, and the Papacy itself moved slowly toward an extraordinary debasement.

CHAPTER VI

THE POPES PASS INTO THE IRON AGE

The first Catholic scholar to write a complete history of his Church was the learned Cardinal Baronius, of the second half of the sixteenth century. Since he was so orthodox a Papalist that he would have been elected Pope but for the political opposition of the Spaniards, and seeing that his main purpose was to refute the Protestant contention that Rome had gradually built up its fabric of doctrine and authority, we do not expect to find him critical. Yet when, in the course of his large work, in twelve folio volumes, he reaches the stage at which we have arrived, he is remarkably outspoken. It does not seem to have occurred to him that apologists could, as they do in our time, attempt to defend the Papacy of the tenth century. He calls it the *Sæculum Ferreum,* which might be translated Iron Century, but is in any case a reference to the classic myth of a degraded Iron Age following upon Golden and Silver Ages. And he calls the first half of it, frankly, the Rule of the Whores (*scortorum*), to translate his words literally. Until modern times Catholic historians usually left it at that.

We understand why the Catholic apologist no longer likes this candour. Human and social interests have come to loom so large in the modern mind that any institution which claims our consideration must have a regard for them. Hence the myth that the Papacy, or at least the great Popes, directed or inspired the rebuilding of civilization after the destruction by the Teutonic barbarians of the ancient world. The chief purpose of the writing of this work is to show how grievously the British Catholic is

to-day duped about the history of his "holy" Church and "holy" Fathers, and how the general public are duped by the facile repetition in our literature of the myth that the Popes either restored or accelerated the restoration of civilization in Europe. We find the Teutonic invaders of Italy—the Goths, Lombards, and Franks—attempting after two or three generations of contact with an ancient culture to restore social life to a higher level and the Popes destroying their work. We shall presently find this true also of the Saracens and the Normans. Yet we see Rome itself, over which the Popes have despotic power, remaining at a low moral, social, and intellectual level and sinking, five centuries after the fall of the Empire, into what no one will hesitate to call semi-barbarism.

In this chapter we have to study carefully how or why the Papacy of Nicholas I becomes the squalid Papacy of the tenth century. Mgr. Mann and the apologists think it enough to say that a body of nobles (many of whom could not write their own names) with "swinish and brutal lusts" captured the Papacy. But that is exactly what we would have explained to us. Do not these apologists claim that the precise service to civilization of the Popes at this period was that they curbed the swinish and brutal lusts of nobles and princes? But we prefer facts to argument in history, so we return to the chronicles.

The successor of Nicholas was not elected promptly, and during the delay Rome had a first proof of the hatred and contempt of clerical authority which that Pope had aroused. Lambert, Duke of Spoleto, rode into the city at the head of his men and was joined by a number of resident Franks and Lombards. For the hundredth time citizens cowered pale in their houses while bands of unrestrained soldiers stole their property and violated their wives and daughters. The nunneries were, as usual, desecrated and the churches looted. Lambert seized a number of maids of the wealthier Papalist families

and handed them over to his men. No help came from the Emperor, who was attacking the Saracens in the south. In fact, when the Emperor defeated these and took rich booty from them, one of his own vassals in Southern Italy, the Duke of Benevento, attacked him and compelled him to surrender the spoils. Within a month of the death of Nicholas, Italy discovered how futile his sacerdotal dictatorship had been. Within a year Rome itself was to yield a more awful proof; and the facts are well known to every historian who has at least an elementary acquaintance with the Papal record.

The new Pope, Hadrian II, was seventy-five years old, and is described as a man of moderate and inoffensive character. We shall see. He at once declared an amnesty, and Nicholas's rebels and exiles came back to Rome. But his leniency angered the zealots and did not reconcile the nobles. At the head of the opposition were now the former Legate Arsenius, who was disappointed that he had not been elected Pope, and his sons Cardinal Anastasius, whose grievances we already know, and Eleutherius. They were of the highest nobility and wealthy. We read even at this time on almost every page of sons and " nephews " of Popes and bishops, and the explanation given is that they had been married and had raised families before they became priests.

Pope Hadrian himself had a daughter who is said to have been born before his ordination; though the frivolous may reflect that it is curious that a priest of seventy-five has a daughter of marriageable age, which in medieval Italy generally meant the middle 'teens. The daughter was, in fact, not yet married but betrothed when, in 868, Eleutherius seized her and brought her to the mansion where he lived with his bishop-father and cardinal-brother, and compelled her to marry him. He is said to have abducted her, yet her mother, the Pope's wife—or ought one to say widow?—went to live with her. These mansions of the Roman nobles already appear to

have been fortified castles, for the Pope was powerless, and appealed to the Emperor. Whereupon ex-Legate Bishop Arsenius gathers together his treasures and goes to buy the favour of the Empress. He conveniently dies at Benevento, where the court is; the Empress gets the treasure, and the Emperor sends a detachment to Rome. So Eleutherius, member of the highest clerical-noble family in Rome, cuts the throat of his wife and her mother; and he is beheaded and his family scattered.

In the following year Lothar made his final appearance. Hadrian had lifted the ban from the gay Waldrada, but had refused to liberate the unhappy Queen Theutberga from her loathsome position. Lothar came to Rome, and after a few days of coldness dined with the Pope and arranged a reconciliation ceremony. During a solemn Mass Lothar and the Archbishop Günther and other supporters came up to the altar to receive the communion from the Pope, and, with the sacrament in his hand, the Pope made each swear a heavy oath that Lothar had never committed adultery with Waldrada! One wonders if there was even a Roman tinker in the church who did not know that they all lied brazenly. Waldrada and her lady friends must have heard the news with great interest.

Lothar died soon afterwards, and the wicked uncles, who had for years rejoiced in the childlessness of Theutberga, pounced upon his kingdom, Lorraine, and divided it between them. The French King, whose western provinces were by this time fearfully ravaged by the Vikings of Norway—utter barbarians who have, nevertheless, been idealized in our time—had at least the weightier claim on the ground of need, but the Pope's interest was to conciliate the German, the Emperor Louis II, and he showered anathemas upon Charles of France and his clergy. They took no notice of them, and the royal brothers agreed to divide Lorraine.

For this the Pope had an ignoble revenge. Charles

had made his son Carloman an abbot and had heaped ecclesiastical benefices upon him. Neither Popes nor bishops objected to this common way of providing for a younger son, whatever his character was, but when Carloman went on from hunting and venery to rebellion and general brigandage of the most outrageous description, Charles called upon his bishops to excommunicate him. Carloman, on the strength of the Forged Decretals, appealed to the Pope, and the "venerable" Hadrian wrote King Charles a scalding letter about the inhumanity of his treatment of his innocent son! Carloman was the most notorious and most cruel brigand in Northern France and Belgium, yet the Pope promised excommunication to any bishop who excommunicated him or any noble who fought against him: of which again they took no notice. Carloman was caught, blinded, and imprisoned; but his friends rescued him, and he resumed his gay ways, as far as possible, in Germany.

Chief among the French prelates who pleaded the cause of the French King with the Pope was Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims. Hincmar is one of the "grand figures" whom apologists for the Dark Age press upon our notice, as if we had overlooked them. We reply, of course, that the fact that there were a few such figures in Europe at a time when the general life was as I here describe it does not in the least prevent us from speaking of a Dark Age. But Hincmar himself was not the austere moralist that some assume. We saw how discreetly Pope Nicholas and he taunted each other about the Forged Decretals, for both made use of them and both knew that they were forged. This weakness now had an unpleasant sequel for Hincmar himself, and Pope Hadrian did not spare him.

Hincmar had a nephew of the same name and, regardless of the man's character, he provided for him by consecrating him Bishop of Laon. The nephew's arrogance, greed, and unjust appropriations to support his

luxurious life turned the whole diocese against him. A noble whose estate he seized by armed force appealed to the King, and a troop was sent to recover the property. The bishop laid an interdict—a fearful punishment in the Middle Ages, since it closed all the churches and cemeteries and left men in hourly fear of hell—upon his diocese, and his archiepiscopal uncle quashed it. In virtue of the Forged Decretals the unscrupulous bishop then appealed to Rome. His conduct was as notorious as that of Carloman, yet the Pope excommunicated, without inquiry, the noble whose property had been seized and threatened to excommunicate the King and the archbishop for forbidding the nephew to come to Rome. The letter which Hincmar wrote, in the King's name, to the Pope disturbed even the bluster of the new pontifical dictatorship. The Kings of France, it said, are not the lackeys of the bishops, nor are the supposed laws of the Church to which the Pope appeals known to anybody in France. "What hell has vomited these things upon us?" the letter asks. It ends with the disdainful request: "Pray do not send us or our bishops further commands or letters which we have to despise."[1] It seems to have frightened the Pope, who moderated his tone; and Bishop Hincmar, the nephew, was tried and degraded by a synod and was, for rebellion against the King, blinded and imprisoned.

Such, in condensed description, were Rome, Italy, and Europe during the five years after Nicholas had drenched them with anathemas and, according to our more polite historians, stamped upon the mind of Christendom a new regard for virtue and justice. I said that we study in this chapter how the Rome of Nicholas's day became in a generation the Rome over which loose women ruled. We begin, however, to perceive that we need make no drastic search for causes of deterioration. The men of

[1] The letter is reproduced by Cardinal Baronius in his *Annales*, year 871.

whose conduct we have just seen a few examples were the men of Nicholas's day. He had wrought no change whatever in their minds. They were sufficiently superstitious to be intimidated for a time by his blood-curdling sentences, but they merely awaited the accession of an older and weaker Pope; and they began, when the thunder of the voice of Nicholas was stilled, to reflect that the Papacy ruled the world primarily in its own interest.

For a time Papal Rome was sobered by the need of a mighty effort to save the city from the Saracens, for the tortuous policy of the new Pope, John VIII (872–882), left him without a protector. The Emperor Louis died in 875, and Charles of France, according to all the contemporary authorities, paid the Pope and the Roman Senators large sums of money, and promised help against the Saracens, if they would support his improper claim to the succession. The Pope invited Charles to Rome and crowned him in St. Peter's on Christmas Day, 875. Later he was crowned King of Italy at Pavia, and at this function Charles accepted a gold sceptre from the Pope in token of his virtual vassalage. When the Germans resented this act, the Pope wrote them a series of haughty letters. He, the Viceregent of Christ, had chosen an Emperor. He will tolerate no insolence of princes, but will excommunicate the lot of them "if they continue to rebel against God."

When Charles in turn died, and his successor needed all his resources to meet the Normans in the west and the Germans in the east, the Pope had to face the dire consequences of his conduct. The Roman nobles and higher clergy split into pro-German and pro-French parties, each animated by a bitterness which would presently have appalling results for the Papacy. The dukes and marquises who had been left in charge of the various provinces of Italy, since it was now a kingdom under a French prince, watched with eager interest how

the rival branches of the Carolingian dynasty wore themselves out and failed to produce a man of ability, and they began to declare themselves independent rulers. The Saracens spread in a devastating flood over the land every year, and the governors of the southern provinces repeatedly entered into alliance with them and defied the Pope's anathemas. It is related with pride by Catholic historians how Pope John VIII became a vigorous military commander, on land and sea; and they invite us to admit that this incessant war upon the Papal territory and dire threat to the city of Rome not unnaturally led to some demoralization.

It is an unsound plea. The main body of the Africans had now settled in Sicily and had adopted an orderly civic life; and every substantial force that was sent against those of them who still lived by piracy and banditry was successful. A league of Italian armies would, without any help from France or Germany, have held them firmly south of Naples. That such a league was never formed was due as much to the totally unprincipled policy of the Pope, who did not merely seek the safety of Rome, but a restoration of Temporal Power, as to the low character of the princes themselves.

In the year 876 the Pope excommunicated a group of his opponents in Rome for treason and conspiracy to murder him. The only one of the group who attracts our sympathy—and he would certainly not be in a plot to murder, if there was such a plot—was the Bishop of Portus, Formosus, who later became Pope and was the victim of a horrible outrage. He was very highly esteemed at Rome for his learning and, it is said, his integrity, and was opposed to the Pope on grounds of policy. The other leaders of the group were typical members of the nobility. Sergius, nephew of Pope Nicholas, had repudiated his wife and lived with a Frank mistress: George had murdered his wife, a niece of Pope Benedict, in order to marry the daughter of one of the

highest Papal officials and had bribed the judges and been protected by his father in court.

While the Pope was at Pavia, they looted the Lateran and several other churches and fled to their ally the Duke of Spoleto. They heard later that John proposed to go to France to beg aid against the Saracens, and, rightly suspecting that he wanted to make another French Emperor and use his forces to crush the Saracens and the Italian princes and annex their provinces, they marched upon Rome and occupied the Leonine City (St. Peter's and the Vatican area). They demanded that the Pope should consent to the election of the German Carloman as Emperor and permit the return of the Roman exiles. But John, although they kept him a prisoner for thirty days, refused, and they seem to have retired without attaining any result.

The Pope then removed the treasures of St. Peter's to the Lateran and, bribing the cynical Saracens with a promise of 25,000 pounds of silver a year, he took ship for France. When he arrived in Provence, he was most devoutly and most flatteringly received by Duke Boso, a rich and powerful prince and one of the most highly coloured characters of that picturesque age. Boso had notoriously poisoned his first wife and married, or compelled to marry him, the daughter and sole heiress of Louis II. The unscrupulous adventurer wanted to be recognized King of Provence, if not Emperor, and he became for a time John's most intimate and beloved son. The Pope literally adopted him as son, and in his letters he unctuously praises Boso's virtue and piety. Boso was, of course, to bring his army to Italy. So after a leisurely tour in France, in the course of which the Pope crowned Louis the Stammerer and shed anathemas right and left, even upon the thieves who stole the Papal horses, John and Boso returned to Italy. It must be said that he made strenuous efforts to get a crown for his adopted son, but the Italian bishops and princes would not receive the

boor, and he went back to Provence. The French and Germans had meantime agreed that the crown of Italy must go to the German prince Charles the Fat, the last ignoble descendant of Charlemagne, and John was compelled to abandon all his intrigues and crown him.

Meanwhile the Pope, in the course of his vigorous war against the Saracens—he was repeatedly at "the front" and at one time on the fleet which he had built—had another painful experience which reveals his character and further illustrates the character of the age. The Duke of Naples, Sergius, was one of the princes who protected themselves by maintaining friendly relations with the Saracens in spite of the Pope's fiery letters, which spluttered anathemas; as, in fact, the great majority of his three hundred extant letters do. The duke's uncle Athanasius was bishop, and at his death Sergius got his own brother, another Athanasius, appointed to the See. John fully approved of fighting bishops, and this was not the only case in which he sanctioned the consecration of a noble of loose but vigorous character. Athanasius, however, was crafty as well as unscrupulous, and his letters to the Pope bemoaned the iniquity of his brother the Duke, who, in spite of a Papal raid on Naples and the execution of a score of the nobles, continued to traffic with the Saracens. The death of the Emperor and the growing anarchy in France and Germany had encouraged them, and Southern Italy was a desolation.

Bishop Athanasius then organized a revolt in Naples, seized the person of his brother, cut out his eyes—"dug out" is the blunt expression of the monk-chronicler—and sent him to Rome, where he "died miserably" soon afterwards.[1] The bishop took over the duchy, and the

[1] The events are narrated by a monk of the neighbouring abbey of Monte Cassino, Erechembert, in his *Historia Longobardorum*, no. 39 (Migne, Vol. CXXIX, col. 765).

way in which the Pope congratulates him (*Ep.* XCVI), especially upon his courage in mutilating his own brother, is only slightly relieved in its nauseousness by the fact that John now believed that he had at least a loyal son of the Church in command of this most important duchy. Athanasius is, he says, " a man of the House of the Lord, full of justice and holiness, of truth and humanity."

One is almost tempted to reflect that the Pope deserved the punishment that he got. Secure in the possession of the duchy, Athanasius threw off the mask and, in alliance with the Saracens, spread fire and sword over the country as far as Rome. The monk Erechembert, who lived in the midst of the horrors, paints a terrible picture. His own abbey, Monte Cassino, the most famous in Europe, had hitherto been spared. It was now burned to the ground and its abbot murdered. The swarthy Africans and the soldiers of the bishop-duke worked together in looting and burning churches, desecrating nunneries, and destroying monks and monasteries almost to the gates of Rome.

On an earlier page I told how the Patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, who had raised the sacred anger of Pope Nicholas to a white heat, was respectfully recognized by Pope John. We have seen so much in the meantime that it will seem to the reader that this recognition must have been in the last generation, but it occurred in the year we have reached. John appealed in his distress to the whole Christian world for help, and Constantinople, which still enjoyed its short phase of scepticism and prosperity, almost alone responded. Not without a grimace, which we faintly trace in his letters, John swallowed all the crimes and heresies of the Greeks, and with the aid of their fleet beat back the Saracens. Their bishop-ally now pretended to desert them, on condition that the Pope paid him a large subsidy, but John found that he still secretly aided them, and excommunicated him. He begged forgiveness, and the terms which the Pope offered

him would seem incredible if we had not the letter in which John states them:—

> If, in the presence of our Legates, Bishop Marinus and the Papal secretary, you capture the leading Saracens, of whom we give you the names, and as many more as possible and, cutting the throats of the others (*jugulatis aliis*), you send the leaders to us at Rome, we will relieve you from the ban of excommunication.

The Pope died in the following year. There is only one account of his death, but this is given in the Annals of the monks of Fulda, which was, after the destruction of Monte Cassino, the chief centre of Christian culture in Europe. The monks say that a relative of the Pope poisoned him and, when the poison acted slowly, beat out his brains with a hammer. The writer on John in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* asks us to reject the story on the ground that the monks give a wrong date! The writer probably knows that if we reject chroniclers of this barbaric age on the ground of jumbles of dates, we blot out European history for two or three centuries.

John is the only Pope between the death of Nicholas in 867 and the beginning of " the Rule of Whores " in 904 about whom we have much information. And if the reader asks whether it is not possible to put into the scale a few meritorious deeds and qualities to weigh against what we have seen, he will be disappointed. The incidents I have described so clearly and consistently exhibit the character of the Pope that no sensible man will look for another set of experiences indicating a different character. His outstanding merit from the ecclesiastical point of view is that he saved Rome from the Saracens. We may appreciate the energy with which he organized some sort of army and navy, though that is merely to ascribe to him the common virtue of rulers in face of a grave threat. He made no effort to arrest the deepening degradation of Roman and European character. His letters offer nauseous flattery to the most vicious of princes

when he wants their services, and he shows no sense of principle in the changes of his alliances; while his relations with Athanasius of Naples betray the growing barbarity of even educated Romans.

Ten Popes succeeded each other in the next twenty years, and what we know about most of them is hardly worth telling. The murder of John VIII led to a victory of the German faction, which may have inspired it, at Rome, since the new Pope, Marinus—the bishop whom John sent to witness the bloody treachery he demanded at Naples—lifted the ban from Bishop Formosus and allowed the exiles to return. His successor, Hadrian III, inherited the passionate conflicts which ensued, and all that we know of interest about him is that he had the eyes cut out of one of his leading opponents and had the noble wife of another stripped naked and in that condition whipped through the streets of Rome. Of his successor, Stephen V, a weak man who, strangely, lasted six years in a chaotic world, we have only a few impersonal details. It is said that he found the Papal treasury empty, and a decree of a Roman Council of the year 904 throws a curious light upon this. The decree condemns a custom which has been established of allowing the officials and people to sack a Pope's palace when he died. We gather, in fact, that the original practice of looting the Pope's palace has grown into an " orgy " of wild street rejoicings and breaking into houses throughout the city and suburbs which lasts several days; and the newly elected Pope has then to distribute a generous sum of money in largesse. Thirty Popes died in the next hundred years and released this " bacchanalian rejoicing," as the decree calls it.

The shadows deepened over Rome when, in the year 891, Formosus was elected. The name of this Bishop of Portus, who is said to have been one of the most accomplished of the Roman clergy—not a very high distinction —has already come before us several times, and the first fury of the barbarous outbreak of the ninth century will

centre about his memory, yet his personality is elusive. He reigned five years, and in the scanty chronicles of that bleak age we read only about political changes and the clash of arms. What is clear is that the clergy and nobles of Rome were bitterly divided on the question of a successor to the imperial crown. Formosus and his friends favoured the claim of Arnulph, a natural son of Carloman and a truculent and dissolute man. They felt that an Emperor who lived beyond the Alps would be less apt to interfere in Roman life. The other faction wanted an Italian Emperor and had a candidate in Guido of Tuscany, or, when he presently died, his son Lambert. The head of this faction was the priest Sergius, the open lover (as we shall see) of a daughter of the most important noble family and a close associate of the Tuscans. Formosus banished him from Rome—it was his second bitter exile—and he went to nurse in Tuscany the wrath which would soon light the fires of hell in Rome.

Arnulph was on his way to Rome with a German army when Formosus beat his rival Sergius in the Papal election and banished him. The Germans retired, however, and Formosus was compelled to crown Lambert of Tuscany, whose mother, a virago of a type that was becoming common in European life, was the nerve of his army. But Arnulph returned, and his path to Rome was a broad stretch of ruin and sacrilege. Nunneries fared as usual; priests were led in chains through the streets; the soldiers caroused with loose women in the churches. Sergius and the Tuscan amazon meantime led their troops to Rome and imprisoned the Pope. The Germans advanced and released him, and he crowned Arnulph. But that Emperor's wild debauches brought upon him an attack of paralysis, so that he was taken back to Germany; and a few weeks later Formosus died. We do not feel disposed to resent the story of some chroniclers that he was poisoned by agents of Sergius.

Arnulph still lingered in the north of Italy, and the

electors chose a colourless Pope: a gouty and gluttonous old priest who had been suspended by John VIII for the irregularity of his life. He died a fortnight after his consecration, and, as Arnulph was now back in Germany and helpless, the Italian faction celebrated their triumph with a revolting act. They elected Stephen VI, whose character we may gather from the ceremony at which he soon presided. Pope Formosus was to be tried for his transgression of the canons in accepting the Papacy when he was already a bishop. The Roman clergy had long before passed a rule that no man who was already a bishop could become a candidate for the Papacy: a rule which in effect ensured that the prize would always fall to one of themselves. It is perhaps the most ironic as well as the most revolting incident of this appalling period of Papal history that, to show their resentment of the breach of this innocent domestic regulation, the entire clergy and nobility of Rome and Central Italy perpetrated a savage outrage.

Formosus had been buried eight months before, but his putrefying body was dug up, clothed in the pontifical robes, and seated in the papal throne. In face of this horrible object were Pope Stephen and all his clergy and nobility and Lambert of Tuscany with his ferocious mother and his bishops and nobles. The " trial " was an obscene farce. The Pope shrieked at the corpse and declared it guilty. The three fingers of the right hand with which Formosus had been wont to give the Papal blessing were cut off. The robes were stripped from the putrid body, and it was then handed over to the rabble, who dragged it through the streets of Rome and in the end threw it, like the body of a dead dog, into the Tiber.

The partisans of Arnulph and Formosus were stung to fury and they in turn roused the people; and Stephen was put into prison and strangled. His successor lasted four months, the next Pope twenty days: which was just time enough for him to recover what was left of the body of

Formosus and bury it. Three Popes followed in four years. The German faction remained dominant, and Sergius was again sent into exile. But when Leo V was dethroned and imprisoned by his chaplain, the Cardinal Christopher, and this man got himself elected Pope. Cardinal Sergius came along with a small army, swept Christopher into a monastery (and probably the grave), and achieved his ambition. The Rule of the Whores began.

There had now been thirteen Popes since the death of Nicholas I. The only three whose character is well known to us, from the record of their actions and from their letters, are Hadrian II, John VIII, and Stephen VI; and it is in each case a very defective character. Whatever the character of the others, they had no influence. They were corks tossed for a few months on a sea of passion. What arrests our attention is what we may call the Papal Circle: the upper stratum of Roman life from which Popes, cardinals, and the Papal and civic officials were drawn. It was thoroughly and comprehensively corrupt. Nicholas had made no impression upon it. Gregorovius, the historian of the city of Rome, reflects at this stage:—

> Sinister darkness brooded over Rome, scarcely relieved by the doubtful glimmers which ancient chronicles let fall upon this terrible period. A fearful scene is disclosed: violent barons calling themselves consuls and senators, rising from among them brutal or wretched Popes: beautiful, fierce, and debauched women.[1]

This darkness we shall now find growing deeper and more sulphurous and brooding over the city of the Popes for a further hundred and fifty years. And professors at estimable universities tell their pupils that there never was a Dark Age, and that the Popes steadily raised Europe out of the morass into which the barbarians had driven it.

[1] *History of the City of Rome*, III, 224.

CHAPTER VII

THE RULE OF THE COURTESANS

In the course of the long dirge with which he opens his record of events in the first year of the tenth century Cardinal Baronius says:—

> A century that for its violence and its lack of all goodness ought to be called the Iron Century: for the monstrousness of its evil the Leaden Century: for the meagreness of its literature the Dark Century.

The historical writers who smugly condemn their predecessors of the last century for—they say—inventing the myth of the Dark Age may be surprised to learn that it was the Father of Catholic History and staunchest of Papalists who first used the phrase. They may now change their note and suggest that, if the age was really so poor in culture as well as character, we must hesitate to admit the statements of the writers from whom we derive our knowledge of it. Modern Catholic apologists, in fact, make some use of this argument, but we smile at the sophistry when they eagerly accept the testimony of a contemporary writer if he for some reason flatters a Pope and reject it when it is unpalatable. The properly-informed historian of our time, however, has no difficulty. If he continues to speak of the tenth century as the Iron Century or the Dark Age, he means *only as regards Rome and the greater part of Papal Europe.*

From the popular literature and certain manuals of history which lazily repeat the legend that the Popes preserved or rebuilt civilization most men get the idea that Rome was a refuge of virtue and culture in a Europe

which was beset on all sides by uncivilized invaders. Their mental picture of the world at this date has Rome as a luminous centre, irradiating a large area of the Continent, while the border-provinces are devastated by Danes, Normans, Prussians, and Saracens, and the world beyond lies in darkness. It is grotesque. Certainly England was at this time ravaged by the Danes, Western France by the Northmen, and the southern one-fourth of Italy by the rougher Africans; but it is surely time we abandoned the idea that the " history of the world " in the Middle Ages is merely, or chiefly, the history of Italy, Germany, France, and England. These countries, comprising about one-third of Europe, were in the tenth century a comparatively small and barbaric area lying outside an enormously larger region, stretching from Spain to China, which enjoyed a high quality of art, culture, prosperity, and (generally) social idealism. And in the semi-barbaric area itself which was subject to the Popes Rome was not a luminous centre, but one of the darkest patches. It was not a lighthouse. It was a cesspool.

Nor was this because it received a taint from an environing barbarism. North and south of it in Italy were two areas of civilization. A day's sail to the South, in Sicily, the Africans had already built up a very fair and rapidly advancing civilization. The chief authority on this, Amari (*Storia dei Musulmani in Sicilia*), shows that in the first half of the tenth century one of three divisions of the island had a settled and prosperous population of about two millions, and that by the end of the century Saracen Sicily had eighteen cities with splendid arts, crafts, and engineering—Palermo had five hundred mosques, one of which accommodated seven thousand worshippers—and nine hundred towns and villages. At the time when a couple of depraved women and their descendants ruled the Papacy, and Rome was sodden with ignorance and crime, Sicily, two hundred

miles away, had a much finer civilization than it would have in the days of Queen Victoria.

Still nearer to Rome were the cities of North Italy which had recovered much of their Lombard culture and produced the best literature of the age. Liutprand, the courtly and genial Bishop of Cremona, wrote attractive and generally reliable histories of the time. Ratherius, the more devout Bishop of Verona, has left us a remarkable, if tearful, picture of the highly civilized luxury and vice of most of his episcopal colleagues, who hunted on horses with gold trappings, had rich banquets with dancing-girls when the hunt was over, and retired with these to beds with silk sheets and gold-embroidered covers. Thus the Papal area in Central Italy was a swamp of barbarism lying between two cultivated areas. It was not infected from without, but developed disease from its own morbid ideas and institutions; and so it would remain until, in the eleventh century, the Germans came and purged it for a time of its moral poison.

The picturesque phrase of Cardinal Baronius which I have chosen as the title of this chapter applies to the first thirty years of the century. It must not be taken quite literally. Bishop Liutprand, it is true, repeatedly calls the ladies "shameless whores"—he uses the coarsest Latin word for that class—and Cardinal Baronius emphatically repeats this, but the remarkable women who now enter our story were the wife, Theodora, and the daughters, Theodora and Marozia, of the leading noble of the city. All that Liutprand tells us in detail about the mother is that she compelled a handsome priest to reciprocate her passion for him and got him appointed Archbishop of Ravenna and later Pope John X. He, however, clearly suggests that all three were promiscuous when he says that her daughters were "even more prompt in the service of Venus." Of the elder daughter, Theodora, we know only that she had several children—we have a deed on which they make a cross, like a

Russian peasant of the last century, because they cannot write their names—but Marozia, the bishops tells us, was the mistress of Sergius, either before or after he became Pope in 904, and their son was Pope John XI.[1] The *Pontifical Chronicle* itself says that John XI was the son of Sergius, and Abbot Flodoard, the most conscientious chronicler of the time, says in his *Annals* (year 933) that he was the son of Marozia.

The older Catholic historians admitted this contemporary testimony without hesitation, especially in view of the comprehensive corruption of the age. All historians pass much the same general verdict upon it as Milman (III, 299):—

> Nor was the Supreme Pontiff alone depraved in these turbulent times. The great ecclesiastics of Italy are mingled up in most of the treacherous and bloody transactions of the period. . . . The obscenities which perpetually occur in the pages of Liutprand betoken an age of profound corruption. The Italian character was now a strange fusion of lust and ferocity. The emasculation of their enemies was a common revenge.

But the modern apologist, who knows that his readers will not check his statements and must not consult the works of writers who do, is not daunted. We have found new documents since the days of Baronius, says Professor Kirsch in the article on John X in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, and that Pope is quite cleared. He was "a relative of Theodora's family," and so was naturally helped by them.

For this statement there is not only no authority whatever, but it is a perversion of a suggestion lightly made by Gregorovius that he "*may* have been." Theodora, says Father Kirsch in this scientific *Encyclopædia*, was at the time of John's election, "advanced in years and is highly praised by other writers (*e.g.* Vulgarius)." Since Theodora's daughter Marozia had just been married at the date of John's election (914), and Italian girls of

[1] *Antapodosis*, II, 48.

that age married in their 'teens, there is no reason to suppose that the mother was even forty years old. As to the " other writers," of whom Vulgarius is one " example," Father Kirsch knows well that this Neapolitan grammarian is the *only* writer of the age who calls her virtuous; and the reason is that in his first work he had accused Pope Sergius of two murders and, being threatened, wrote a poem in which he heaped virtues upon the whole Papal circle.[1] Lying is preferable to having one's tongue cut out.

The reader will feel, after reading about the outrage on the corpse of Pope Formosus, in which Sergius took a leading part, and the ghastly record of mutilations, that we have entered upon so foul a period that it is waste of time to consider these modern apologetic discussions of a few amorous adventures, and we will resume the narrative. Theodora was, as I said, the wife of the leader of the Roman nobility. This man, Theophylactus, combined the dignities of Master of the Papal Wardrobe, Master of the Troops, Consul, and Senator: the highest offices for laymen in Rome. Theodora herself had the title Senatrix; Marozia, when her turn came, was Senatrix and Patricia (the title given to Charlemagne), so that they were, Liutprand ironically says, " the monarchs of Rome." Gregorovius reproduces Roman documents of the time which show, as I said, that some of these leading ladies of Europe could not sign their own names. They were women of a type which we have already encountered since the seventh century and shall find all over Europe in the so-called Age of Chivalry: beautiful, of immense nervous energy and ambition, amorously aggressive, callous, densely ignorant, and completely unscrupulous. This faction triumphed and their rule began when, in 904, Sergius returned to Rome at the head of an army, evicted from the Papal chair the cardinal who had just established himself in it, and

[1] See E. Dümmler, *Auxilius und Vulgarius*, 1866.

became Pope Sergius III. The contemporary Vulgarius says that he had his two predecessors murdered, and they disappear so completely that Dümmler accepts this. It seems probable.

Sergius ruled for seven years, and from references to the age of his son, Pope John XI, we gather that it was now that he was intimate with Marozia. But the nobles, headed by Theophylactus and Theodora, kept Rome quiet, and almost all that the meagre chronicles tell us about the pontificate of Sergius is that he rebuilt the Lateran Palace, which had been for some years a heap of ruins. We have no further information of interest about the three years after the death of Sergius, when two obscure Popes succeeded each other. Then Theodora summoned her archiepiscopal lover from Ravenna and made him Pope John X. According to Liutprand, he was a very handsome provincial cleric whom she had met during one of his many visits to Rome and forcibly annexed. He would hardly require compulsion. Theodora and he had been present a few years earlier at the foul treatment of Formosus because he had accepted the Papacy while he was a provincial bishop. Now, although John is an archbishop, they cynically ignore the canons. But every writer of the time testifies that clerical morals were appalling throughout Italy, and we shall see far worse things than these, even about John.

John X is chiefly remembered as a military commander. He took the field in person against the Saracens and defeated them. But the non-Catholic writers who, like Milman and Gregorovius, give him high praise—forgetting the sacred law of the Church which forbids a priest to shed blood, and that John had an able military commander to do the work—for these secular services, have to record other acts of his which show that he shared the general perversion of character of the leading Popes of this period. He indulged in nepotism, or the enrichment of his family, and by this conduct he pre-

pared the way for a deeper degradation of the Papacy. He invited or joined in the invitation of the Hungarians, who were at this time still half-civilized Asiatics, to come and fight his enemies, and he thus brought a new and terrible plague upon his country. And he had no principle whatever in his diplomatic and political conduct.

John had put the imperial crown upon the head of Berengar, the German-Italian King of Italy. The rival faction at Rome invited Rudolph of Burgundy to come and dispute it and help to lay waste Italy, and it was then that the Pope joined with the King in summoning the Magyars, who were as ruthless as the early Saracens. A third and more formidable claimant, Hugh of Provence, now appeared.

Critics of the Church sometimes make the mistake of assuming that woman sank into a state of subjection as soon as the Popes attained power. This is very far from the truth as regards women of noble rank. During the greater part of the Middle Ages, or until Innocent III completed the fabrication of the Papal Power, women of fierce energy and aggressiveness, generally of hard and unscrupulous character, often fiendishly cruel, rise into prominence in all parts of Europe. One of these was Bertha of Provence, natural daughter of the siren Waldrada and the King Lothar who, we saw, swore on the sacrament in St. Peter's that he had never committed adultery with her. Bertha wanted the Kingdom of Italy for her son, Hugh, and, when she died in the year 925, his sister Irmengard took up the malodorous tradition of the family.

Bishop Liutprand, our chief source of information for this half-century, is rejected by Catholics as a witness (when what he says is unpalatable to them) on the ground that he was lascivious. But he was at this date, or soon after it, in the service of Hugh, and is the best-informed historian of the period. Hugh, his patron, he describes as a man who took equal delight in the con-

versation of scholars and the embraces of loose ladies: in other words, he posed as a great prince and was quite princely in his vices. Irmengard he pictures to us as a new Messalina. In the pursuit of her ambition for her brother she gave herself "not only to princes, but even to men of ignoble condition." She traversed North Italy winning the support of bishops and nobles, and in the end of the Pope. Hugh was invited to come to Italy and drive out the Burgundians, and the Pope went to Mantua to meet him and his charming sister.

John X had by this time entered upon a bitter quarrel with Marozia—Theodora was dead—and the leading nobles of Rome. He had brought his brother Peter to Rome, raised him to the rank of nobility, and heaped upon him the profitable offices which the nobles had come to regard as their preserve. Courteous writers on the Pope invite us to admire his design to break the power of the wicked nobles and, with Hugh's help, to extend to the degraded abbeys of Italy the reform which had recently begun amongst the Benedictine monks of France. We smile. The warrior-Pope was a quaint enough reformer, but Hugh was one of the most openly licentious princes of his age. It was a struggle for power. The nobles, led by Marozia, drove Peter from the city. In agreement with the Pope he summoned the Hungarians and let them loose upon the provinces. The Pope and his brother then returned to Rome, but a body of Marozia's men cut their way into the Lateran Palace and murdered Peter before the Pope's eyes.

They imprisoned the Pope, and Liutprand says that they smothered him with a pillow. Our *Catholic Encyclopædia* says that this is just a rumour reproduced by the frivolous bishop and "thus little to be relied on"; that we must prefer the more respectable Flodoard, who tells us that John "died of anxiety." This is the new "science" of history. We are to reject the testimony of the bishop who lived in Italy and prefer the abbot who lived a

thousand miles away; and the abbot is wrongly quoted. What he says is that "some say he died of violence, but more say that he died of grief." Moreover, the *Annals of Beneventum*,[1] written by monks in Italy, says that the Pope was "murdered in the Castle"—the Castle of Sant'Angelo, of which Marozia had taken possession—and the only other writers of the century who refer to the Pope's death support this. He completely disappears after being seized by Marozia's men, and there is no serious reason to doubt that he was murdered.

Marozia, Patricia and Senatrix, ruling Rome from the Papal Castle of Sant'Angelo near St. Peter's, was at this time married to Guido of Tuscany, her second husband. But she coldly calculated that Hugh of Provence was the rising star in Italy, and she decided to marry him; and Hugh was not indisposed to a union with the most powerful woman in the country. Marozia's husband and Hugh's wife conveniently "died," but there was still a very grave impediment, for Guido had been Hugh's half-brother. Hugh swept away the obstacle by declaring that his mother, who had fought so strenuously for him, had duped her second husband. She had had no children by him and had fraudulently imposed Guido and his brothers as her own offspring. One of Guido's brothers demanded an ordeal by duel, and he won, but Hugh removed the new obstacle. He had his stepbrother trapped, blinded, and imprisoned. Then he led his army to Rome; and the Pope, in the year 932, blessed the union, in the Castle of Sant'Angelo, of the two murderers and libertines. And, to crown the infamy of it, this Pope was Marozia's own son by Pope Sergius III.

Her son is said to have been too young for the pontificate at the death of John X; from which I have inferred that he was born about, or shortly before, the date of John's election (914), and that therefore, since an Italian

[1] In the *Monumenta Germaniae*, V.

girl was then commonly a mother in her 'teens (often at fifteen), it is preposterous to call Theodora " a woman of advanced years." Marozia had appointed two Popes in succession after the murder of John X, but both had died within three years, and she had in 931 ordered the election of her bastard son. He actually ruled the Church for five years, but, in spite of the virility of his mother, this son of Pope Sergius was a spineless youth who was content to discharge in obscurity the technical functions of his office and enjoy its revenue. Very different in character was his half-brother Alberic, the son of her first husband, who proved a match even for the formidable Hugh.

Rome was soon heavy with a feeling of revolt against its new rulers. We should like to attribute this to a lingering feeling of decency, but it was probably due to the arrogance and greed of Hugh and the Frenchmen he imported. He treated Marozia's son Alberic with brutal disdain and compelled him to wait at table; and one day he struck the youth for spilling water over him. Alberic rushed into the city and kindled the smouldering passions of the citizens. Hugh and Marozia were besieged in Sant'Angelo, and the prince, basely deserting his wife, fled to his army. He shortly afterwards declared his marriage with Marozia invalid and married again; and the hectic career of Marozia ends with the bald statement that her son Alberic put her in prison. The rest is silence. We can but reflect that murder was now epidemic.

The rule of the courtesans, which had lasted about thirty years, was over; yet, incredible as it may seem to the reader, the Papacy was now to sink to a lower depth of degradation and, except for a period of a few years, when some political freak put upon the sordid throne the most learned man in Christendom, it was to remain in this foul condition for more than a hundred years after the disappearance of Marozia. I repeat that there

is in the history of the heads of other religions no approach to a parallel with this period of complete debasement: an almost continuous period of a hundred and fifty years from the trial of the corpse of Formosus to the German reform of the Papacy. Yet even educated Catholics will, if you succeed in getting them to read these pages of history, airily brush aside their significance and tell you that they never regarded the Popes as "impeccable"; and historical writers who know that these facts are unquestioned, and that other long periods of degradation will occupy us later, continue to say that the Popes were a priceless force in the restoration of European civilization.

Marozia's son Alberic, who ruled the Papacy and Rome for the next twenty years, is represented as a reformer because during his reign he secured the election of Popes to whose name no scandal is attached. Indeed, the Pope who succeeded John XI, whom he had permitted to continue in the Papal office, was a monastic reformer, Leo VII, who was encouraged to attempt to apply the new French or Cluny reform to the corrupt abbeys of Italy; though he accomplished little in the three years of his pontificate. Our standard historical work, the *Cambridge Medieval History* (V, 5), says that "the great Italian monastery of Farfa is typical of the general condition." After its restoration in 936, the first year of Leo's pontificate, two noble youths who were monks in it poisoned the abbot, and one of them took his place. By his various mistresses he had seven sons and three daughters, and he provided for these out of the revenues of the abbey. The second murderer became Abbot of Fermo, which rivalled Farfa in gaiety. All the monks were married, and their wives made silk dresses out of the sacred vestments. At Farfa Abbot Hildebrand and his mistresses and children got so drunk at one of their banquets that they set the abbey afire. Alberic sent troops and imposed a strict abbot upon them; and

five years later they murdered him and returned gaily to their vices.

The idea of Alberic as a reformer is piquant. He brought about the worst degradation of the Papacy by compelling the nobles and clergy to promise on oath that, if he died, they would carry out his design of making his own son Octavian Pope; and the youth was being educated in vice under his eyes. Indeed, the regard for virtue of both is well illustrated by the statement, which was afterwards judicially established, that the young Pope included among his many mistresses " one of his father's concubines." In the biblical language which Cardinal Baronius used, the rule of the whores merely gave place to the even more scandalous rule of the whoremongers. The simple reason why Alberic put upon the Papal throne two or three men of, as far as we know, respectable character was that he was determined to have men who would forget the pretension to a Temporal Power, so that he could enjoy the revenues of the former Papal States and exercise dictatorial power in all secular affairs.

Alberic died in 954, and Pope Agapetus in the following year. Prince Octavian, as he had been titled during his father's life, which rather suggests that Alberic dreamed of his son becoming Emperor as well as King of Italy and Pope, was eighteen years old when Agapetus died. We cannot suppose that the life of unrestrained licence which he had adopted was hidden from either clergy or nobles, and they committed an outrage against every standard of decency as well as against the canons of the Church in making him Pope. As secular ruler he was still Octavian, but he set a new precedent by adopting the name of a saint—John XII—for his pontifical work. It would be difficult to imagine a priest who was farther removed from saintliness, yet, in an age when the average life of a Pope was about two years, he kept the throne for ten years and enjoyed the boisterous support

of the nobles and of the general body of the clergy and citizens.

Bishop Liutprand, who was now one of the leading prelates of the time, gives us in detail the charges which were made against him by the Roman clergy when he was denounced to the Emperor.[1] Gathering about him the loosest young nobles, of both sexes, in Rome, he turned the Lateran Palace into a "brothel" and "a stable." He would spend the day hunting with them or riding abroad in the armour of a knight, and the evenings were passed in drunken carousals and gambling. He drank toasts to the devil and invoked the pagan gods and goddesses as he flung the dice. He "liked to have a collection of women," says the monk-chronicler Benedict of Soracte; and the Roman clergy deposed that he had incestuous relations with his sisters and raped or seduced the more handsome of the women who came as pilgrims to Rome. He made a mockery of religion by consecrating a bishop in a stable. He castrated a cardinal who ventured to reprove him, cut out the eyes of another priest, and punished many in various ways.

These charges are not "gossip that is repeated by the lascivious bishop," but statements sworn to by the highest Roman ecclesiastics in a trial at which Liutprand was present. As long as the vigorous Alberic lived, the Italian princes had confined themselves to their territory. Even the Emperor Otto had, when he came on pilgrimage (he said) to Rome, found the gates closed against him and had been compelled to retire. But the Italian princes stirred when Alberic died, and John, after futile expeditions against them at the head of his troops, had invited Otto to Rome and crowned him King of Italy and Roman Emperor.

They took the usual oaths of mutual fidelity, yet before the Emperor was out of Italy he learned that the Pope

[1] *De Rebus Gestis Othonis*, a short account of the Emperor Otto's reign.

was intriguing with the Italian princes against his authority. He sent officials to make an inquiry at Rome, and we are told that he heard from these about the Pope's vices. It is impossible that he had not heard of these during his weeks in Rome. In any case, he merely observed that John was "just a boy" and would grow out of his frivolous ways. Nothing, perhaps, more luridly illustrates the character of the age than this authentic story of the greatest monarch in Europe, from the country (Saxony) which was then in advance of most others, remarking that the "Holy Father" must be allowed to sow his wild oats and might be expected in time to settle down.

But the charge of disloyalty to himself was a different matter; especially as the Pope sent him an impudent letter accusing the Emperor of disloyalty to his oath by failing to restore the temporal possessions of the Papacy. We again smile at the historians who prove that there was no Dark Age when we read that Otto, king of the country which these historians select as particularly civilized, sent two bishops who should either swear to his innocence or appoint two champions who would fight a murderous ordeal-duel with any two champions selected by the Pope! John, apparently, did not like the heavy swords of the Germans. He refused and, when the Emperor came to Rome with his army, fled with his treasures to Tivoli.

A crowd of prelates and nobles, German, French, and Italian, gathered about the Emperor in St. Peter's while the witnesses deposed to the crimes and vices of the young Pope. When he was summoned to reply to them, he sent a five-line letter, which looks like the effort of a boy who has had six months at Latin, threatening to excommunicate them all.[1] To a second summons the

[1] Students of Latin may be amused to have a specimen of it as it was written by noble pupils of the Lateran School in the tenth century. "Nos audivimus," wrote the Pope, "quod vos vultis alium Papam facere. Si hoc facitis, excommunio vos." This is

reply was: "The Pope has gone hunting." So the Emperor declared the Pope deposed and requested the Roman clergy to select a priest of respectable life to succeed him. It appears that they could not find one in Rome, for the new Pope, Leo VIII, was a layman who had to be put through all the clerical orders in a day!

It was near Christmas, in the year 963, when these extraordinary yet exceptionally authenticated events—for Liutprand was present—occurred, and, after the celebration of the Nativity, the Emperor sent away part of his army. And a few days later, on January 3, the Romans flew to arms at the call of church bells and streamed over the bridge to make an end of the Emperor who had deprived them of their beloved Pope. Many were killed in the fight with the German troops, but Pope Leo begged an amnesty for the rebels, and Otto marched away to the North. He had not gone far from Rome when Leo hurried to his camp with the news that the Romans had recalled John, and nearly the whole city had boisterously welcomed him. The loose women of Rome, we are told, had been particularly active in his interest. John now called a synod in St. Peter's and fell mercilessly upon the bishops and cardinals who had agreed to depose him. One cardinal lost his nose, tongue, and two fingers. Otto angrily made for Rome once more, but he heard on the way that John was dead. He was killed, the chronicles say, by the devil while he was raping a woman in a house in the suburbs. The truth appears to be that the husband of the woman thrashed his Holy Father so severely that he died of the wounds eight days later. And the official epitaph inscribed upon his tomb at Rome declares him

---

quite elegant in comparison with the Latin of such contemporary writers as the Monk Benedict of Soracte, who does not know the most elementary rules of Latin grammar, though Latin was still in Italy the only language in which one could write.

to have been "an ornament of the whole world." These epitaphs are part of the material used by Catholic writers in their biographical sketches of the Popes.

The Romans swore that they would not accept the Pope whom the Emperor had forced upon them, and they elected Benedict V. His Papal career was short. The Emperor soon arrived with Pope Leo in his train, and Benedict was degraded and sent into exile; and in a fit of temper the virtuous Pope broke the Anti-Pope's crozier acoss his knee. But Leo died in the following year, and, with the consent of the Emperor, the Romans, whose right to elect a Pope was now drastically restricted, chose John XIII, Bishop of Narni and son of a Bishop of Narni.

John was a noble of the Theodora family, and he was arrogant, covetous, and a nepotist. He enriched his relatives, and the Romans drove him into exile and attempted to give their city a democratic and secular government. The Emperor Otto was weary of restoring Popes to their "beloved sons," but he could not tolerate this assertion of independence and, after a long delay, he returned to Rome. The character of Pope John XIII is painfully revealed in the terrible reprisals. The body of the Prefect who had ordered John out of Rome, and who had died soon afterwards, was dug up and torn to pieces. His successor was handed over by the Emperor to the Pope, and John had him first suspended by his long hair from a statue in the public square, then led, stark naked, on an ass through the streets. He faced the tail, on which was a bell which he had to ring, and he was decorated with wine-skins. Twelve Tribunes of the People were hanged, and a number of others were executed, brutally treated, or exiled. Europe had become callous, but it shuddered when it heard of Pope John's idea of justice. Even the Greek Emperor told the representative of the Roman Emperor what they thought of him and the Pope.

The Romans loathed the Pope, but the sword of the Emperor was suspended over their heads, and John, who fawned upon the brutal monarch, lived in uneasy and undistinguished peace for six further years. The death of Otto I in the spring of 972 led to a new conspiracy, and, when the Pope died four months later, the Romans set up a rival to the Imperialist Pope, Benedict VI. Led by the noble family of the Crescentii, the people chose a deacon who is variously called Bonifazio and Francone, son of some obscure Ferruccio. We shall probably be correct if we assume that he was " Boniface the Frank," or an illegitimate son of some crude small noble by a Frank mistress. At this time many French, English, and German " ladies " who came on pilgrimage to Rome were seduced or raped there and remained as courtesans. Pope Benedict was strangled in the castle of Sant'Angelo—the fifth Pope murdered in seventy years—and Boniface VII opened his inglorious career.

There were, in fact, to be seventy further years of corruption, and I will give a mere summary of the record. Boniface VII is described by the learned Gerbert, or Pope Sylvester II, who ruled thirty years later, as " a horrid monster "; and many historians believe that it was Gerbert who, speaking at a synod at Rheims in 991 at which the degradation of the Papacy was discussed, said that Boniface was " a man who in criminality surpassed all the rest of mankind." It is amusing to read how, when the French prelates at this synod taunted the Romans with their ignorance, the Pope's Legate replied that " the Vicars of Peter and their followers will not have as their master Plato or Vergil or Terence or any other of these philosophical cattle." The reader must not, by the way, imagine that this synod represented French virtue regarding with dismay the vices of Rome. It had been summoned to pass judgment upon the young Archbishop of Rheims, who had in the previous year been solemnly recommended for the See by the

French King on the ground that he was a "son of Lothar of divine memory by a concubine." He was steeped in vice, natural and unnatural, but, when he added treason to his crimes, the King directed the synod to expose his ways and condemn him. Gerbert was the young libertine's secretary and was held to be involved in much of his misconduct.[1]

Boniface seems to have crept into office with the aid of a pro-Greek faction, which again appears in the life of Rome, but the German party recovered power, and six weeks after his election Boniface found it prudent to pack up the portable treasures of the Lateran and go to live in Constantinople. Under German influence a bishop of regular life now became Pope, but all that history records of the nine years of the pontificate of Benedict VII is that he piously restored churches and reformed a few wicked monasteries while representatives of the Emperor held the Romans in leash.

John XIV took up his work in 983, but the Emperor died soon after the election, and his widow led her forces back to Germany to protect the accession of her three-year-old son; and the "horrid monster," watching the course of events from Constantinople, hurried back to Rome with bags of Greek gold. He put John in the dungeons of Sant'Angelo, where he was slowly murdered by starvation and neglect, cut out a few pious eyes, and settled down once more in the dishonoured "Chair of St. Peter" or the "Holy See." But he had not the gay appeal of that other pontifical rake, John XII, and the national party rose against him. It is not clear whether he was murdered or died a natural death, but the Romans amused themselves by dragging his body through the streets and in the end tossed it into the gutter.

[1] For the synod, see *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, V, 28. One bishop, who makes a superb indictment of Rome, calls the Pope Anti-Christ.

John XV, who succeeded him, earned in two years a European repute for avarice and venality. A devout French abbot who came to Rome, Abbo of Fleury, said, according to his monk-biographer, that John was "greedy of gain and venal in all things." He died within two years, and the Emperor secured the election of his own cousin, Bruno, who took the name of Gregory V. The new Pope was a youth of twenty-four, but a new type of noble. He was an austere Christian idealist, and he was going to restore the Papacy of Nicholas I, while the young Emperor built up once more the Empire of Charlemagne. Within a year the idealist was driven from Rome, the nobles making a mockery of his anathemas.

There was at Rome a Greek-Italian bishop who had acquired great wealth in the ways known to corrupt prelates, and he paid the noble Crescentius, who held the secular rule of the city, a large sum for the title of Pope (or Anti-Pope) John XVI. He did not long enjoy it. Otto came back next year with his German army and his cousin-Pope; and the austere, virtuous, and refined Pope looked on while the poor Greek was deprived of his eyes, ears, nose, and tongue and, in that mutilated condition, driven round Rome on a mangy ass, holding its tail for bridle. Crescentius and twelve other democratic leaders were beheaded, and their bodies hung by the feet on the battlements of Sant'Angelo; though the Emperor had induced them to surrender on a promise of immunity. Some chroniclers say that Stephania, the widow of Crescentius, was handed to the German soldiers, while others say that the Emperor took her as one of his mistresses and she lived to poison him and the Pope. Nilus, the holiest hermit in Italy, solemnly warned Emperor and Pope against their savagery, and Rome was not surprised when the "saintly" Pope died immediately afterwards, to be followed in a couple of years by the Emperor at the age of twenty-one.

As successor to his zealous and futile cousin the young

Emperor had put forward the most learned man in Christendom; indeed, the one man in Christendom who had any other than ecclesiastical erudition. Catholics naturally boast of their scientist-Pope Sylvester II (Gerbert) and, as we saw, the new historians write pages on him and decline to notice all the corruption that preceded and followed him. His pontificate was, in point of fact, one of the worst and most futile blunders of the romantic and unbalanced young Emperor, Otto III. Gerbert's knowledge of science is no longer a mystery. Even the *Catholic Encyclopædia* admits that he learned it in the Arab schools of Cordova and Seville—it would be safer to say in the Arab-Christian schools of Barcelona and the Arab schools of Cordova—and his efforts to win the Romans to astronomy and mathematics drew upon him a murderous hatred and left a sulphurous memory that lingered for centuries. His character is ambiguous, but we need not examine it, for he did nothing as Pope. Doubtless he encouraged the fantastic dream of the half-Greek young Emperor. Germany, heavy with drink and gluttony, was to be abandoned, and a new Empire was to have Rome as its brilliant centre and the Pope restricted to spiritual matters; for Otto seems to have been shown by one of the Greek scholars in his suite that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery. But Italy rebelled against Otto, and Rome drove out the Pope; and both died, under suspicion of poison, in 1003.

With Otto III died the "Ottonian Renaissance" which we are supposed to have overlooked in our study of medieval history. We have seen the three Ottos act with all the barbarism of their age, and, though the matrimonial connection of Saxony and Greece had certainly led to some taste for art and luxury, there was no intellectual revival—the Greek world was incapable of inspiring this—and at the death of the third Otto Germany and Italy fell back into the semi-barbarism of the Dark Age. Both countries were demoralized by a

new struggle for the imperial title. While North Italy was absorbed in this murderous conflict, Rome remained under the rule of the Crescentii family and the democrats, and three undistinguished Popes were appointed by them during the six years after the death of Gerbert. During the pontificate of the third of these, Sergius IV, the Germans crushed the Italian claimant to the Kingdom of Italy, and the Counts of Tusculum, whose seat was only fifteen miles from Rome, decided to support the Germans and with their aid capture Rome and the Papacy. They were descendants of the Theodora-Marozia family, typically ruthless and unscrupulous barons, and under their control the Papacy passed into the final phase of its long degradation.

In the spring of 1012 Pope Sergius IV died, and the Crescentii and their supporters proceeded to elect a successor; but an army of Tusculan troops, led by the son of the Count, entered Rome and seized power. Their commander, a layman, got himself elected Pope Benedict VIII, and, although the legitimately elected Pope appealed to the new Emperor, he, bribed by a promise of coronation in Rome, declared for the Tusculans. There is nothing to interest us in the record of Benedict and his successor, John XIX, in the next twenty years, for we have seen enough about campaigns in Italy, revolts and brutal repressions in Rome, and futile attempts to reform the morals of the clergy. What we have to consider is the last phase of the Papacy of the Dark Age, after so many centuries of reforms and "renaissances."

Benedict VIII and John XIX had been brothers, sons of the Count who designed to keep within his family the entire wealth of the city and the Papacy. They had discharged their pontifical duties as well as most of their predecessors had done during the preceding hundred years, but the family now, with revolting cynicism, put forward a boy of twelve for the Papal throne; and,

heavily bribed—so all the chronicles state—the clergy and nobles of Rome elected him and assisted at the solemn farce of his consecration. I call this not only cynical but revolting, for the boy must already have given proof of his character. A youth who by the age of twenty had a record of vice and murder which amazed all Christendom can hardly have been a little angel at the age of twelve. Except for a small minority, to which we will return presently, Rome was, six hundred years after Leo I had established the supremacy of the Papacy, four hundred years after "the Carolingian Renaissance," and half a century after "the Ottonian Renaissance," more debased than it had been in the days of Nero.

Mgr. Mann, whom English Catholics now urge upon us as their most scholarly historian, here gives us a choice specimen of the new art of apologetics. After an amusing attempt to dispute the age of Benedict IX at his election, partly by inference from the words of Pope Victor III, who expressly assures us that Benedict was then a boy of twelve, he airily brushes aside the charges against his character. "If," he says, "the youthful pontiff was careless of his own character—how far careless want of knowledge of details presents us from judging." [1] Seeing that Bishop Benno accuses Benedict of "many vile adulteries and murders," and that Pope Victor III speaks of his "rapes, murders, and other unspeakable acts" and says that "his life as a Pope was so vile, so foul, so execrable that I shudder to think of it," the Catholic historian is bolder than usual. Reading these charges in the light of the common practices of the age, we understand that the Holy Father indulged

[1] *The Lives of the Popes*, Vol. V (1910), p. 241. The chief contemporary authorities are Pope Victor III (Pope forty years later) in his *Dialogues*, Bk. III (Migne, Vol. XLIX, col. 1003); the Monk Raoul Glaber in his *History*, IV, 1 (Migne, Vol. CXLII); and Bishop Benno of Placentia in his *Liber ad Amicum* (Migne, Vol. CL, col. 817). No writer of that or any later century differs from these in regard to the Pope's morals.

unrestrainedly in natural and unnatural vice and extortion and murdered any who opposed him.

This chapter is already of inordinate length, though the reader who fancies that I am dilating unduly upon vice will perceive, on reflection, that the chapter covers a century and a half, and that I have severely compressed the picturesque chronicles. But we will hasten to the end. After three or four years the Romans drove out their Pope. He joined the Emperor in North Italy and, by promising to excommunicate prelates who were supporting Conrad's rebels, won his support and was reinstated at Rome. These reforming German Emperors, we again notice, could overlook Papal vices when it suited them. After six further years of gaiety—like the other Papal rakes he lasted four times as long as the average pontificate—there was another revolt. Benedict won robust supporters, partly by offering to resign and marry the daughter of one of them, and there were bloody fights. The Bishop of Sabina bribed and detached his supporters and was consecrated Sergius III. Rome rallied to Benedict, however, and drove out the Anti-Pope.

The last phase, which no one disputes, is remarkable. The reform of monasteries, which had not yet spent its first fervour, had converted a few of the abbeys and convents of Rome, and round these gathered a spirited minority of puritans, including Cardinal Peter Damiani, author of the most sensational exposure of clerical morals (*The Book of Gomorrah*), and a young monk, Hildebrand, who was to make history. With them was a wealthy priest, John Gratian, Benedict's godfather and a very simple-minded and devout man. The reformers gave their first proof, of which we shall see many, of their belief that the end justifies the means when they encouraged John to buy the Papacy from Benedict for 2000 pounds of gold: Benedict cynically observing that that was what his relatives had paid for it. We have a letter

in which Peter Damiani boisterously congratulates John on this gross act of simony; and this at a time when every religious writer bemoaned that simony was the greatest curse of the Church. What Benedict would do with the gold they knew well.

Like all these tainted devices of the puritans, their unscrupulous act recoiled upon them. Gregory VI, their new Pope, exhausted his remaining wealth in the hire of soldiers to secure order in Rome. William of Malmesbury gives us in the second book of his *Chronicle of the Kings of England* a spirited picture of Rome in the last days of the Dark Age. Pilgrims had ceased to come. Brigands—servants of the Italian nobles—beset every road. Assassins infested every street of Rome, and " their swords were drawn in the churches and over the altars." The offerings which pilgrims laid upon the altars were at once snatched off by thieves. The necessary struggle against this barbarous state of things, which is, of course, ignored by apologists for the Dark Age, gave the rival Popes encouragement. Benedict, who had spent his gold in riotous living in a country castle, came back and entrenched himself in the church of Sta. Maria Maggiore: Sergius returned and seized the Lateran: Gregory and his monks occupied St. Peter's.

The next move of the reformers was to appeal to the new Emperor, Henry III, holding out to him the prospect of a coronation at Rome. They sent their simple-minded Pope Gregory to meet him, and the cordial reception that he got misled them. Henry called a synod (1046) at Sutri, and the bishops decided that Benedict, having already abdicated, need not further be regarded, and that Sergius must be degraded and banished as an anti-Pope. But, to the dismay of the puritans, they then summoned Gregory to explain how he became Pope, and he had to assume the position of a penitent and confess that he had been guilty of " the most vile venality

and simony." And since, says Bishop Benno, they found no cleric in Rome who " was not either illiterate, or guilty of simony, or living in concubinage," the Emperor ordered the election of one of his German prelates, the Bishop of Bamberg, who was consecrated on Christmas Day, 1046; and Gregory and the fiery young monk Hildebrand, and other leading reformers were taken away in the Emperor's train to Germany, lest they make further mischief at Rome. Such was the Papacy in the last hour of the stretch of history which we are now invited to admire.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEBASEMENT OF EUROPE

THE historical facts which we have examined in this Book afford a decisive answer to the painfully familiar claim that the Popes of the six centuries of the Dark Age preserved, helped to preserve, or re-created the vital elements of civilization in Europe. Rome was too corrupt to effect this: too selfishly absorbed in securing its own wealth and power to attempt it. By the tenth century it had forgotten the character of the civilization which had once illumined it. The day had come when its leading spokesmen, pupils of its chief school, could lump together the comedian Terence, the poet Vergil, and Plato as "philosophical cattle": at a time when, most writers say, the monks were busy preserving the classics. The facts compel us to suppose that Roman character remained at a very low level throughout the period. At every provocation we see the people and "nobles" resort to savagery: to murder, rape, theft, and gross mutilations. We find what I have called the Papal Circle—the higher clergy and the nobles who supply or elect Popes—so corrupt that repeatedly, in every century, they make violent, vicious, or entirely worldly men what they call Vicars of Christ.

We find this corruption and violence erupting immediately after the death of each of the "greater Popes": Gregory I, Hadrian I, and Nicholas I. It is therefore futile to say that at least these strong and religious pontiffs must be regarded as preservers of civilization. The historians who repeat this proceed on an ethical assumption, when they are not merely complaisant to our

Catholic censors, and close their eyes to the facts. The assumption is a lazy acquiescence in two literary-historical superstitions: first, that sexual freedom weakens the foundation of civilization, and, secondly, that the preaching of justice is a social preservative.

Not only is the first point in conflict with the facts of history, but sexual restraint is the very quality in which Papal Europe was most conspicuously lacking from end to end of the Middle Ages. As to the second point, it is obvious that, apart from the general futility of preaching, the nature of the preacher's conception of justice is of primary importance; and the Papal conception was false. Here we have a large part of the explanation of the failure of even the best Popes. To the massive injustice of the social order, the oppression and brutalization of nine-tenths of the people, they were blind; and they sought wealth and temporal power for the Papacy by such means—forgery, untruth, the use of barbaric troops, etc.—that they themselves undermined social ideals. In a word, to four-fifths of the elements of what is soundly called civilization these religious Popes were indifferent; and the virtues of chastity and justice on which they insisted were the least practised of all virtues in the Middle Ages.

Our survey of six centuries of medieval life has further shown us the worthlessness of the plea that the Popes did in fact constantly rebuild civilization in Europe but that invasions of barbarians down to the eleventh century periodically ruined their work. The answer is that the Popes themselves, at least after the fifth century, generally invited the barbaric peoples—Lombards, Franks, Magyars and Normans—to lay waste Italy in an attempt to recover the Temporal Power for them; that every beginning of a restoration in Italy was due precisely to these barbarians after a few generations of contact with the old culture and was in nearly every case ruined by the Popes; and that the worst debasement of Rome and Central Italy

had nothing to do with invasions, for the Saracens never entered Rome or advanced north of it. One is amazed at the excuses that are now made for that social futility of the Papacy which it is increasingly difficult to question. An American historian has blamed the plagues which swept over Europe for the long stagnation. Even an undergraduate in history ought to know that the ravages of the plague were far worse in the later and progressive part of the Middle Ages than in the Dark Age.

But enough of argument: let us return to facts. These are of such a nature that students of history will one day read with amusement the eloquent pages in which the share of the Papacy in preserving or restoring civilization is described: most particularly the new American historical literature which gratifies Catholics by discovering that there never was a Dark Age. A typical work is *Mediæval Foundations of Western Civilization* (1929) by Professors G. C. Sellery and A. E. Krey, with an introduction by Dean Ford, head of the University of Minnesota. Dr. Ford tells us that " there was a time " when part of the period covered by the book was called the Dark Age, but this title was possible only because of the unjust way in which historians treated it. Now " the clouds of dust have cleared from the pages of modern writers," and we see the true worth of the period " between Romulus Augustulus and Richelieu ": that is to say, from 475 to 1620.

One would expect the Dean of a University to know, if he ventures to write on history, that no one counts the Dark Age as lasting beyond 1050 or 1100, or supposes that even the Middle Ages stretch to the seventeenth century. But there is a worse irony in the book itself. It clears away " the clouds of dust " and corrects the wicked Victorians (not to speak of our *Cambridge Medieval History*, the finest work on the period) by suppressing all unpalatable truth and monstrously expanding the fragments of virtue. For instance, the professors give two

(inaccurate) pages to Pope Sylvester II (Gerbert), who did nothing, and do not mention the dozen vicious Popes who preceded and followed him or the century and a half of Papal degradation. They devote four pages to a single monastic reform, and say nothing about the corrupt condition of the great majority of the monasteries throughout the Middle Ages. They are, apparently, unable to read a medieval chronicle in any language, and they make not the feeblest attempt to explain why Papal Europe produced no respectable art, literature, philosophy, or science during seven centuries, why slavery lasted until the later Middle Ages, why ninety per cent. of the people of Europe were illiterate until the eighteenth century, and so on.

The genuine social student who consults history in order that he may make a just valuation of institutions which played a prominent part in it wants not only facts but facts stated in their correct proportion. He is not interested to hear that a saintly monk reformed a number of abbeys of his order for a time in a particular century; that some abbot in another century dealt faithfully with the serfs on his estates or was interested in the classics; that we do find a saintly man, even a saintly Pope, here and there in the long course of the Dark Age. Such things he takes for granted. It is the general truth that matters. And if we apply this search for the general truth to the most important aspects of life in the Dark Age, we finally dispose of the question of the social value of the Papacy. Europe was semi-barbaric after six centuries of their domination of it.

Since the chief preoccupation of the greater Popes, after their concern about their Temporal Power, was the inculcation of virtue in the narrower or sexual sense, we may begin with this; though what we have seen about Rome itself and the royal or noble or episcopal delinquents who come under the notice of the severer Popes dispenses me from saying much. Doubtless there were always

some who observed the code, but sexual licence was general in all classes. In the lowest and largest class, which means nine-tenths of the population of Europe, it had grosser features than any that we find mentioned in classical literature. The Catholic of our time has in his prayer-book an exhaustive list of " sins " which he reads, to refresh his memory, when he is going to confess. The lists drawn up in the ninth and tenth centuries, in the form of questions which a visiting bishop or a priest must put (often publicly) to the people, could not be published in English to-day; and I am not referring to rape, incest, sodomy, and bestiality, which were common.[1] We have seen how, from the sixth century onward (until about three centuries ago, as a matter of fact), soldiers on the march or after taking a town, and even the town-workers in a riot, indulged in promiscuous rape and took particular delight in the desecration of nunneries. On certain festivals (Feast of Fools, of the Ass, etc.), to which I will return in the next book, the clergy joined with the laity in a wild debauch of drink, indecency, and licensed blasphemy in the cathedrals.

The very common practice of public emasculation, even at times of nobles and bishops, throughout this period and until the Reformation, is proof enough of this grossness of all classes. In the Penitentials (lists of sins) of the ninth and tenth centuries the bishop or priest asks—in much blunter language than mine—" Have you castrated any man? " as coldly as he asks, " Have you cut out any man's eyes? or tongue? or cut off his ears or nose? " Long after the Dark Age is over we shall find a canon of Paris cathedral hiring men to commit the outrage on the greatest scholar in Christendom, and the scholar, Abélard, loudly insisting that he is entitled by law to have the canon publicly treated in the same

[1] Read, if you can read half-barbarous Latin, the questions recommended to priests by the pious Abbot Regino of Prum (Germany), in the tenth century, in his *Disciplina Ecclesiastica.*

manner. This mutilation was performed in public throughout the later part of the Dark Age (and later) everywhere, and no Pope or (as far as I can ascertain) bishop protested.

I have had to give many examples of the morals of nobles and princes, but it will be more convenient to consider this class and the knights in the next Book. I have also often referred to the morals of the higher clergy, and could quote a hundred witnesses to their general corruption, like that of Bishop Ratherius, which we saw. Of the same date in the tenth century we have a letter (XC) of Bishop Atto of Vercelli to his clergy, quite courteously arguing with them about their adulteries and fornications. For France at the same date (909) we have the lengthy report of the Council of Troslé,[1] at which the Archbishop of Rheims and his colleagues expose an appalling general corruption of French bishops, priests, monks, and nuns. We saw how Bishop Gregory of Tours reported the same general condition in the sixth century. St. Boniface, of the eighth century, reports a still deeper and more thorough degradation of the French bishops, clergy, and monks in his letters to the Pope. Boniface was equally familiar with Church life in France and England, and his letters give an even more lurid description of the clerical corruption in England. The numneries are brothels of the nobles, and the nuns murder the babies that are born to them. Two centuries later we have Dunstan exposing and combating just as deep and general a corruption in the English Church; and after the "great reform" of Dunstan we have Bishop Wulfstan, in a sermon to the nation in 1014, giving what Freeman calls "a frightful picture both of national wretchedness and national corruption," including the life of the clergy.

I could, if this were the place to do so, cover the entire period with these testifications to a general corruption of

[1] Mansi, Vol. XVIII, pp. 263–308.

the bishops, priests, monks, and nuns. It is now common in histories of Europe during the Middle Ages to devote one chapter to a description of the life of an ideal abbey. This is mainly taken from the Rule which the monks were supposed to observe, but not one abbey in a thousand did observe. Sometimes the compiler refers his readers to the works of the English monk Bede, of the eighth century, who describes several strict monasteries and nunneries; but of the contemporary witness of Boniface to an extraordinary and far more widespread monastic corruption in England not a word is said. Bede, moreover, was a cloistered and totally uncritical monk of narrow experience, while Boniface was an active missionary who spent his life travelling from abbey to abbey in three countries and reporting on them to kings and Popes. But, while Bede's *History* is used everywhere as an historical document, no one dreams of translating the far more valuable letters of Boniface. And this is called a reformed and more scientific way of writing the history of the Middle Ages.

A volume at least as large as this would be required to put before the reader the entire collection of witnesses (reports of synods, letters, chronicles, etc.) to the morals of bishops, priests, monks, and nuns during the Dark Age. Most of these are collected and stored in the voluminous compilations of the older Catholic historians—Baronius, Pagi, Mansi, Tillemont, Bouquet, etc.—to whom there are no successors, either in point of candour or learning, in the modern Catholic world. I have read most of these contemporary testimonies to both vice and virtue, and the former immensely outnumber the latter. But it is enough here that there was, century by century, a vast amount of corruption of bishops, priests, monks, and nuns. It is in regard to the precise virtue upon which the more religious and more powerful Popes laid the heaviest stress—chastity—that they most conspicuously failed.

World-experience in modern times has confirmed that such general grossness and violence are closely connected with ignorance, and that education is the most potent remedy for them. So Theodoric the Goth, Liutprand the Lombard, and even (when it was too late) Charlemagne, concluded. The Goths and Lombards, we saw, did much to restore the school system of the old Roman civilization, and the Popes destroyed their work. Charlemagne, in mature life, tried to enforce upon the clergy and monks of his kingdom the educational work of the Lombards, ordering the bishops and the monks to open schools, but they did very little while he lived, and they abandoned the work as soon as he died. His grandson, Lothar, attempted, we saw, to restore the work in Lombardy in 825 and, as part of a reform of Rome, compelled Pope Eugenius to call for the opening of schools; and we saw the confession of Leo IV that there were in Rome no men capable of teaching in them. These local and transient efforts represent, except where some decent abbot or bishop maintains a school for a few years, all the educational enterprise of the Dark Age. More than nine-tenths of the people of Europe remained not merely illiterate, as we found the wives and daughters of nobles at Rome, but of an ignorance which is now almost incredible.

We have no expert studies of morals or character during the Middle Ages. They would be too ironical in face of the still-dominant convention that the Popes and priests made people virtuous. But we have a dozen able manuals, based upon thorough research, of the history of education, and they unanimously give the account of the Dark Age which I have just summarized. While Catholic and many other writers continue to repeat the loose rhetoric of Montalembert's *Monks of the West* ("Every monastery was a school," etc.), the experts show that not one monastery in a thousand had a school or devoted itself to copying manuscripts. Craftsmen and

merchants were so few in number in the Dark Age that, apart from the enormous numbers of priests, monks, and nuns, more than nine-tenths of the population were serfs; and modern sociologists like Vinogradov have shown that serfdom was real slavery. Who was likely to care about their education? One abbot in tens of thousands.

The apologist who has at least a moderate knowledge of social conditions in the Dark Age is content to talk about "the learned monks," the schools in which they gave a religious education to youths who were destined for the clergy, and the rooms in which they copied and preserved the classics for us. This myth is the familiar expansion of a few local and temporary phenomena into a general truth. It is true, for instance, that the monks of Ireland and Britain had in the Dark Age a reputation for learning, while those of Italy, France, and Germany were generally ignorant and sensual. Curiously enough, it does not seem to occur to the writers who speak with pride of this reputation that it is singular that the monks are more learned the farther they are removed from Papal Rome. Modern Celtic scholars throw some light upon this peculiar situation. The apostles of Christianity in Ireland found that they were in competition with Druid priests who were very zealous for such culture as they had. The monks, however, turned this into an almost exclusive concern for religious learning; for the secular knowledge of even the most learned monks (Alcuin, Bede, Lupus, etc.) was extraordinarily scanty and inaccurate.

During the six centuries which we have surveyed it is possible to find other centres of monkish zeal for learning, but they are even more restricted and transient than the zeal of the Irish monks. The general verdicts of the experts are fatal to the Catholic claim. Professor C. L. Wells, for instance, who is far from anti-clerical, says, when he comes to tell of the complete failure of the designs of Charlemagne:—

> Through the Dark Age which intervened between the age of Charles the Great and the twelfth century there were at least a few monasteries and perhaps one or two cathedrals where the fame of some great teacher drew students from distant lands.[1]

No one ever questioned that in a stretch of four hundred years, during which tens of thousands of abbots and bishops flourished, "a few" discovered a love of learning. It is pathetic to have to say it. Dr. J. Bass Mullinger, commenting upon the reference of the Catholic writer Ozanam to "the polite and cultivated society of the sixth century," quotes the lament of the contemporary bishop of Tours in that century that "the study of letters has perished in our midst," and assures us that Ozanam's polite society "had little existence save in his own imagination." [2] He adds that in the eighth century "the condition of the episcopal and monastic schools was one of utter demoralization"; and that "the work of Charlemagne was premature and transient." Dr. W. Boyd says in his *History of Western Education* (1928), a book which is careful to offend no prejudice:—

> Under critical scrutiny the evidence available on the subject goes to negative the idea of the monasteries as homes of scholarship from which learning radiated forth into an ignorant world.

The very abbot who is quoted as proof of the learning of the Dark Age, Lupus, says in the first of his extant letters: "In our time those who seek to gain a little knowledge are hardly tolerated." Compayré, another expert, shows in his *History of Paedagogy* that in the enormous and rich abbey of St. Gall, which is especially praised by Montalembert, as late as the thirteenth century not a single monk could read or write. Alfred, whose work in England has been reduced to small proportions by recent

[1] *The Age of Charlemagne*, 1898, p. 304.
[2] *Schools of Charles the Great*, 1877, p. 36.

historians, confesses that " very few " priests in England in his time understood the Latin they read at Mass.

The second source of the myth of the learned monks is that in the Rule of St. Benedict it is prescribed that the monks shall spend some of their time copying manuscripts. The writer who concludes that they observed this regulation while they trampled underfoot the most stringent commands of the Christian code of conduct does not impress us, but at least he ought to know that Benedict had in view solely the copying of *religious* books. How little time the vast army of the monks of the Dark Age spent even in copying religious books is very plainly shown by the size of their libraries. Montalembert claims, in accents which are tremulous with pride, that one monastic library had 6700 manuscripts. Seeing that the Canterbury library, the largest in England, had only 698 manuscripts as late as the twelfth century, we are sceptical, but the pride of the French Catholic is a measure of his real ignorance. In the Greek–Roman world there had been a number of libraries of from 100,000 to 700,000 manuscript works, and in the darkest century of the Dark Age Arab Spain had millions of beautifully written manuscripts. One Caliph had a superb library of 400,000 at a time when there was probably not a monastic library with 400, and thousands of the richer Arabs had private libraries of from 10,000 to 50,000 works. Professor Ribera, the best expert on them, calculates that the paid copyists of Cordova alone must have turned out, in beautiful script and—as they adopted the flat page instead of the roll—often in sumptuous bindings, 70,000 to 80,000 works a year. In other words, Arab Spain must have produced or copied at least half a million works a year at the time when Rome was most degraded and few abbeys had more than a few hundred manuscripts. Yet our literature is full of references to the zealous monk-copyists and never mentions the Arabs.

The most exasperating feature of it all is that the particular claim that these monk-copyists "preserved the classics for us" is repeated on all sides, whereas I pointed out thirty-two years ago that the highest German authority, Professor Heeren, maintained a hundred years before that "no monastery in Europe rendered any service whatever in connection with classical literature." [1] The only serious claim that we can use in modification of this severe verdict is that a few copies of most of the Latin classics were found here and there in Europe. At the rebirth of classical studies in the thirteenth century it took scholars a full hundred years to discover these in the rubbish of monastic libraries. No monk in Europe could read Greek during many centuries, so that we certainly do not owe to them, apart from one or two disputed small works, the Greek classics. As to the Latin classics, it is obvious that only the monks of corrupt or worldly monasteries would be permitted to spend their time copying such works as the comedies of Terence and Plautus and the poetry of Horace, Ovid, Catullus, Juvenal, and Martial. By their practice of washing the ink from old parchments in order to write their lives of the saints, the monks of the Middle Ages destroyed more valuable literature than they preserved.

This crass ignorance of, with few exceptions, people of every class led to that coarseness in every department of the life of the Dark Age which compels us to pronounce it semi-barbaric. We see this at once, for instance, if we examine the character of the law. Experts write learned dissertations on the fusion of ancient Roman and native Teutonic law, but we have seen enough to recognize that the result was barbaric. The ghastly mutilations of which we have heard so much were legal penalties as well as acts of private vengeance, and they were inflicted with an appalling frequency in every country.

Very often an accused man, especially if he were a

[1] *Geschichte des Studiums der classischen Literatur,* 1796, p. 101.

bishop or noble, could avoid trial by swearing a solemn oath that he was innocent; which led to the most blatant perjury and sacrilege and to the impunity of gross offenders. The perjury became so fluent and notorious that the nations fell back upon the old Teutonic settlement of guilt by duel. The common men fought with heavy staves, the nobles with swords, lances, or axes. The clergy assisted, often saying Mass before the duel and then watching the murderous conflict. Bishops and women chose champions to fight for them, and down to the twelfth century we find bishops and abbots maintaining at a high wage specially skilled swordsmen who would take up challenges for them. As the prelates took advantage of this to annex territory and property to which they had no right, their duellists were just the equivalent of the paid American murderers. In some places the clergy and monks themselves fought, and, though the better Popes always—though without the least effect—denounced the duel, we find Alexander III in 1165 permitting a priest who has lost a finger in a duel to continue to say Mass.

Ordeals by fire and water were equally common. The priest blessed the large tank of cold water into which an accused man or woman was thrown, to prove his innocence by floating, or the vessel of boiling water into which he must thrust an arm, or the red-hot iron bar. Such spectacles fed the appetite for violence and the gross taste of the people of all classes; and regional variations were crude and innumerable. In parts of Germany a woman vindicated her own "honour." The man, armed with a stick, was half-buried in the ground, while the lady ranged round him in her smock, in one sleeve of which she had sewn a heavy stone. Women fighting in one loose garment became very popular spectacles. In some parts of France a woman who was held falsely to have accused her neighbour had to walk before her in her smock in the next religious

procession while the accused pricked her in the rear with a bodkin.

The torture of accused and witnesses and the savage treatment and mutilation of those who were pronounced guilty betray the same barbarism. There is a short Latin chronicle by the French monk Hermann, of the later Middle Ages, which describes how a canon of the cathedral of Laon, near his abbey, was treated to make him confess to theft. He was hung up by the arms ten times in one afternoon, and after each spell of hanging he was laid on the ground and boiling fat was poured over him. Men were literally boiled in oil in that age which was *not* a Dark Age. Molten lead was used. Water dripped upon stomachs from a height. Women had their breasts crushed or burned. Men had weights suspended from their more delicate organs or cords drawn tightly round them. Fingers were crushed in thumb-screws and limbs drawn out on the rack. Tongues were pierced with a red-hot iron, and boiled eggs were pressed under the arm-pits. Every foul device of the brutalized imagination of the age was used to inflict the maximum of pain, and the result was that men falsely confessed and sought relief in death.

Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen quotes the case of a man of the twelfth century who was accused of stealing a few pence worth of goods; he had his eyes pulled out and his genitals cut off. A. D. White gives a long account of a man who was accused at Milan in the seventeenth century of smearing a wall with something which would cause plague. Under torture he confessed and accused others, and these, being tortured, accused more, so that in the end a large number of people suffered a horrible death. And White shows that the man was just a writer whom two old women had seen wiping the ink off his fingers on the wall.

If we further remind ourselves that the Church multiplied offences (heresy, blasphemy, sacrilege, etc.) by its

own code and insisted that the foulest of the tortures should be inflicted for those offences, and that this barbarism continued almost without rebuke until the Reformation, we need not further consider the administration of justice under a Papacy which is now recommended to us as the special guardian of that virtue. To social justice the Popes, even the greatest of them, were equally blind. Throughout the Dark Age the overwhelming majority of the population remained slaves. It was only later that a verbal distinction was made between serf and slave, neither name being known in the Dark Age. The workers were just *servi*, as they had been in Roman days. The only differences were that, whereas in the late pagan Empire there had been, according to the most recent authorities, three free workers to one slave, there were now ten slaves to one free worker; and that, whereas in the Roman Empire the cruelty of the owner was drastically checked by law, it was now generally without restraint. The one theoretical restraint that the apologist claims is that the serfs of an abbey estate might appeal to the abbot's court in case of injustice or cruelty, but the abbots were generally men of rank, and had no more idea than other feudal lords had of listening to the complaints of slaves.

I could fill a large chapter with instances of the horrible and totally irresponsible treatment of serfs by their owners, but particular instances are, from a social point of view, unsatisfactory, and as a rule the chroniclers of the Dark Age had no social interest to move them to reflect on general social conditions. Whenever they do, they reveal injustice, cruelty, and quite arbitrary abuse. Bede, for instance, tells us that in the Anglo-Saxon days in which he lived it was " the inveterate custom " for the noble to annex any daughter or wife of a serf who caught his fancy and sell her when she became pregnant. There was in many regions a " right to the first night " (after marriage), but the discussion of this which one

often reads is amusing. However restricted the regions may have been in which a sort of legal *right* was recognized, the entire literature shows that feudal serf-owners and their chief agents did not care two pins about rights. Typical is the behaviour of Count Raoul of Evreux in 997. A large number of his serfs were stung by his cruelty into a pathetic sort of revolt. He dealt with them just as his savage fancy directed. They were hamstrung, impaled, or burned alive. Boiling lead was poured over some, and few escaped without the loss of their eyes or teeth.

We shall see in the next Book that the knights and nobles of the later Age of Chivalry treated every class of worker, and even burghers, with the most wanton cruelty, and refused to recognize that they had any rights, so that we need not linger further over the condition of the serfs during the Dark Age. Theoretically the serf differed from the ancient slave because the latter had been the direct personal property of the master, whereas the serf was owned by him through his ownership of the soil. It made no difference in practice. The serfs of the Dark Age had a more miserable time than any class of slaves had in the later period of the Roman Empire, and in Italy in particular they suffered from evils which had been unknown to or rarely experienced by the Italian slaves in pagan days. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader how the agricultural workers suffered in every part of the country from the incessant barbaric warfare we have seen in one generation after another and the terrible epidemics which now racked them. It was much the same in all countries. The life of nine-tenths of the population was vile. The socio-economic system was barbaric.

At least, says the apologist, when craftsmen or artisans multiplied as towns grew in the later part of the Dark Age, the Church founded or encouraged guilds for their protection. These guilds first appear in literature in

the time of Charlemagne, and for nearly a hundred years after the first reference to them, in the year 779, the Church condemns and wages fierce war against them. They are "conspiracies." They are "heathen." In other words, they were feeble survivals of the Colleges (unions) which had once included all the tens of millions of free workers, and often slaves or women, of the Greek–Roman world. The Church opposed them as truculently as Charlemagne did, but it could not extinguish them, so it gave them a religious character and brought them under clerical supervision.[1] And again note the difference between the pagan and the Papal period. In the Greek-Roman world three-fourths of the workers had been free and had had their unions: in the Dark Age free craftsmen were very few in number, and the overwhelming majority were the downtrodden serfs, who had no guilds.

These are the principal general aspects of life in the Dark Age, and no one can hesitate to call it semi-barbaric. We do not forget that a civilized, even a refined, people may permit an isolated barbaric feature to linger; just as the Spaniards enjoyed bull-fights and the Chinese permitted torture. But in these cases we have a single streak of barbarism remaining in a life which is in all other respects highly civilized. That is not the case in the Dark Age. There were not only tortures as vile as those of Chinese prisons and fights far worse than those of Spain, but savage mutilation was common everywhere, war was waged with a brutal license of the soldiers to kill, rape, and loot, and the social system was sordidly unjust; and these features are not compensated by others which redeem the semi-barbarism. No book that is counted good literature was written between Augustine's *City of God* and Dante's Trilogy: a stretch of eight centuries. No buildings, except a few remains of the Goths and Lombards, survive to attract pilgrims as do the old

[1] See my *Social Record of Christianity*, 1935, ch. V, for the evidence.

Greek and Roman remains: No great art of any sort appeared, though the Church called for art and had rich funds to endow it. Character was comprehensively gross; and the mind which had produced the wonders of Greece and Rome was a field stripped naked and full of corruption. The most authoritative work on the period in the English language, if not in world-literature, is *The Cambridge Medieval History*. The fifth volume covers the eleventh century and, after a retrospective survey, the writer of the first chapter says:—

> The early part of the eleventh, as well as the tenth, century is often and rightly called a dark age for the Western Church. Everywhere we find corruption and varied abuses . . . the whole of Roman society was corrupt.

That is the verdict of impartial scholarship.

In the next Book we have to see, not only how the Popes complete the fabric of their power, but also how civilization slowly returns to Europe, and, since the credit is again claimed for the Popes, what agencies really effected the recovery. Here it is necessary only to notice certain efforts which are made by " the new history " to show that the revival began before the end of the Dark Age. I referred earlier in this chapter to an American manual of medieval history. Much more important is *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (1927), by Professor Haskins of Harvard University. As I propose to show, and have shown in all my historical works, that the recovery began in the eleventh century and was in rapid progress in the twelfth century, there does not seem to be any novelty in the claim of Professor Haskins, yet he professes to have discovered new virtues in the Middle Ages and pompously rebukes his predecessors.

He makes the mistake which all writers of this school do of wantonly supposing that we include the *later* Middle Ages under the title Dark Age. He says that it means " all that came between 476 and 1453." That is

quite false. Even Buckle expressly explained (II, 108) that he meant "about five hundred years" or about 500 to 1000; and I know no responsible writer who carries the Dark Age beyond the eleventh century. However, Professor Haskins, like the other reform-historians, finds two "renaissances" even in the Dark Age: the Carolingian and the Ottonian. It is surprising to find this claim made in our day for the work of Charlemagne, since all recent experts on him declare that it has been greatly exaggerated and did not—as we assuredly saw—lead to the recovery of civilization.

The so-called Ottonian Renaissance is a similar exaggeration of a local and for the most part transient improvement. Otto I, a very strong and ruthless man, imposed order—very bloodily—upon Saxony and promoted its economic development; and the growth of wealth and towns led to an improvement of art, and in a few places to a regard for culture. Otto II married a Byzantine princess, and this union brought numbers of Greek artists to Saxony. Otto III, the neurotic outcome of the union, we saw in the last chapter behaving like a savage in Rome. In short, the features of the Dark Age which I have described apply fully to Saxony itself even after the third Otto was dead; and he and his predecessors had made Italy worse than ever. It was more than half a century after the death of the last Otto when Germany began a great architectural development which does count as one of the factors in the restoration of European civilization. But the Dark Age was then over, and the inspiration came, as we shall see, from a source which Catholic and pro-Catholic historians are very reluctant to acknowledge.

BOOK III

THE AGE OF POWER

(A.D. 1050–1550)

BOOK III

THE AGE OF POWER

(A.D. 1050–1550)

HISTORIANS necessarily differ in assigning the dates of the beginning and end of the periods—the Dark Age, Middle Age, and Modern Age—into which they divide the story of Europe after the Fall of Rome. The process of decay or recovery is as slow and gradual as the melting of night into day, and it advances at a different pace in each country. But this difficulty does not embarrass us in dividing into sections the history of the Papacy. What I have called the Papal Circle at Rome clearly remains semi-barbaric until the middle of the eleventh century, when the (German) Roman Emperor gives effect to the disdain of all Europe by cleansing the stables and putting the Papal throne in the power of the reformed monks. We shall see that the reform is temporary and very imperfect, and that the Papacy will pass into a longer period than ever of degradation: a term which we shall be compelled to use in spite of the artistic splendour which in the end gilds its depravity. But before this occurs two powerful and very religious Popes, Gregory VII and Innocent III, so exalt the Papacy above every other power, spiritual or secular, that we properly distinguish an Age of Power, lasting until the disintegration begins with the establishment of Protestantism.

The period is the more important because it coincides with the restoration of civilization in Europe. Protestant and Rationalist historians have never satisfactorily explained the causes of this recovery, after rejecting the

Catholic claim that the Popes were chiefly responsible. Some of them, we saw, are again disposed to favour the Catholic claim. It is significant that these are almost entirely Americans, but even English world-history suffers here from a serious defect: as may be seen even in our admirable and generally impartial *Cambridge Medieval History*. It retains to our own time a traditional prejudice which prevents it from appreciating the greatness and influence of the Arab-Spanish civilization. Although a number of liberal Spanish professors who are masters of Arabic literature have in recent times vindicated this really great civilization—I include their findings in my *Splendour of Moorish Spain* (1935)—the prejudice remains; and it distorts the perspective of European history. We will, therefore, after considering the work of Gregory VII, trace the real constructive agencies by studying, in successive chapters, the moral condition of Papal Europe, which ought to be the primary concern of the Popes, and the artistic, intellectual, and social advances which inaugurated the return to civilization.

CHAPTER I

THE WORK OF GREGORY VII

In the spring of the year 1049 the strangest of all the picturesque processions that had ever approached Rome halted at the Leonine Gate and humbly asked to be admitted. At the head was a tall and stern young German, barefooted and dressed as a pilgrim, and behind him walked, on bare feet, a body of other German pilgrims and Benedictine monks: notably a pale, fierce-eyed monk—he dressed, at least, as a monk, though he had never taken vows—of twenty-five, one Hildebrand, who would soon be better known in Europe than any King. But no bandit had dared molest *these* pilgrims as they rode soberly from the Alps to the Tiber; and the Romans, though they for the most part hated and dreaded them, threw open the gates and raised their festive banners. For the whole might of Germany watched and waited beyond the horizon. When the blond, barefooted pilgrim quietly explained that the Emperor had sent him to be their Pope but he would not accept consecration unless the nobles, clergy, and people of Rome united in inviting him, no one dissented; though nine-tenths of them would more willingly have assassinated him. He was the Emperor's cousin; a strong, austere, haughty churchman, a fighting bishop. Two German bishops in the preceding two years had died, not without suspicion of poison, in the Papal chair. All Europe was on tip-toe, asking: What will those Romans do now?

That year may be taken, if any single year can be selected, as the end of the Dark Age and the commencement of the second and progressive half of the Middle

Ages. Let us, however, on the threshold of that singularly complex age, with all its vices and its virtues, its moral ugliness and its glorious art, consider what these reformers proposed to do and were likely to do. To art, science, and philosophy they were as indifferent as to economic improvement. Of the injustice of the social order, the squalor and ignorance of nine-tenths of the people, the brutal stupidity of the legal and penal system, they were completely insensible. Their programme consisted of four clauses. They would suppress simony or the traffic in sacred offices; they would enforce celibacy and chastity upon the bishops, priests, and monks; they would recover the Temporal Power of the Papacy; and they would strengthen its spiritual authority until no king or noble would dare raise a finger, in any cause whatever, when the Pope forbade it. To adapt a phrase which Emerson applies to Luther, had they foreseen the rich sensual and intellectual efflorescence of the coming Middle Ages, in which we see the glory of that period, they would have cut off their right hands rather than nail their programme to the gate of the Lateran Palace. They were prepared to wade through rivers of blood to attain their ecclesiastical objects. They did wade through rivers of blood, and they in the end imposed celibacy upon the clergy, and made them more immoral than ever; their war upon simony ended in the Papacy itself organizing a colossal traffic in sacred things, from benefices (livings) to indulgences; and the final effect of their war for power was that half the world cast off their rule and exposed the fraud of their credentials. Rome itself they embittered and impoverished, so that when all the world at last moved on, it was left ragged and despised.

The first German Pope, Clement II, had called a synod of bishops to pass sentence of degradation upon any prelate who encouraged simony, and it had broken up in disorder. Did he, the bishops asked, want to empty all the episcopal sees? He lasted a few futile and bitter

months, and the wicked ex-Pope Benedict, who was widely believed to have poisoned him, returned to Rome and resumed his "sacred office" for eight months. Damasus II, who then came, under German guard, lasted twenty-three days. Whether malarial mosquitoes or Benedict's poisoners removed him remains open; but Rome did not go into mourning.

Leo IX, the new Pope, was better protected, and he was young and vigorous. His task was appalling. The people had emptied the treasury, and Leo talked of selling his rich German wardrobe until pious folk relieved him. He then wore himself out travelling all over Christendom in his war upon simony and clerical vice, meeting sullen opposition or cynical evasion in most places. Had he and Hildebrand encouraged, instead of trying to suppress, the marriage of bishops, priests, and monks, they might have reduced the worst evils. Cardinal Peter Damiani, a monk-peasant and ferocious puritan like Hildebrand, wrote and dedicated to him a book on the morals of the clergy and monks. The title, *The Book of Gommorrah*, is enough. Leo read it and thanked him—a later devout Pope suppressed the book in disgust—and he ordered that henceforward every bishop must be asked before consecration whether he had been guilty of sodomy, fornication bestiality, or adultery. I am putting it more delicately than the question is put in the contemporary Latin document which Gregorovius quotes from the Vatican Archives.[1] In the end he alienated his puritan supporters, except Hildebrand, at Rome by taking the field in person—he had earlier been a captain of the episcopal militia and had a high conceit of his military ability—against the Normans, who had conquered most of the south. They defeated and captured him; but they

[1] *History of the City of Rome*, Vol. IV, p. 76. An historian of the polite school has said of Damiani's book that "nothing in Aristophanes, Athenæus, or Petronius gives a picture of more bestial depravity than the one drawn by a Prince of the Church of the manners of his clerical contemporaries."

released him, and he went back to Rome to die of mortification. So ended the first crusade of the reformers.

Hildebrand went to Germany for another Pope, though most of the German prelates now shuddered at the prospect, and Victor II, whom he brought, lasted two years, most of which time he spent on holiday in Germany. There is a legend that the Romans put poison even in his chalice. Stephen IX, the next Pope, lasted six months. To fill the empty treasury and, it is admitted, to make his relatives more comfortable, he ordered that the rich treasure which lay in the vaults of the great monastery of Monte Cassino, of which he was abbot, should be conveyed to Rome. Stephen was a brother o the Duke of Lorraine, and Hildebrand and he now proposed to win independence of Germany and turn to Lorraine. With the Monte Cassino treasure they would raise an army, sweep the Normans out of Italy, and restore the Papal sovereignty. But remorse, or the anger of the monks, checked the Pope's plan, and he went the way of German Popes. Five had died in twelve years.

Here we must again sketch in the political background. So much is said about the German reform of the Papacy that the reader imagines a series of austere Christian Emperors humbly submitting to the dictation of reformed abbots and devout bishops. Most of the Emperors were, on the contrary, not interested in the war of the reformers upon simony and unchastity; and, says the *Cambridge Medieval History*, " among the German clergy of every degree worldliness and neglect of duty, avarice and loose-living, were widely prevalent." But Henry III, the Emperor whose reign (1039–1056) covers the period we have just considered, was a religious man, and had in some ways worked for the reform of the Church and, within limits, for the advance of art and culture. We should on general principles expect Western and Southern Germany—Prussia was still pagan and uncivilized—to be in advance of the rest of Europe, for England was ravaged

by the Danes and France and Italy by the Normans, while the Rhine country was sheltered and prosperous. The advance was, however, retarded by the savage wars which the constituent provinces of the Empire waged with each other and against the Emperor. Henry III had checked these, but he had followed the custom of promoting nobles to most of the rich bishoprics and archbishoprics, and the Church was very widely corrupt.

At his death in 1056 his son, the future Henry IV, was only five years old, and his widow, a lady of weak character, feebly gave away estates, secular and religious, to the nobles, bishops, and abbots who clamoured for them. Seeing this, the Archbishop of Cologne kidnapped the prince, in a particularly disgraceful manner, and won control; and after a time the Archbishop of Bremen got the boy away from him. "Both," says Professor J. W. Thompson, "were fierce and ambitious bishops who hesitated at nothing to attain their end, whether by fraud or violence." [1] These were the two leading prelates of Germany; and I may add, since Henry IV enters our story presently, that at the opulent court of the Archbishop of Bremen he learned more about vice, violence, and luxury than about religion.

For a time the fortunes of the Papacy reflect these German revolutions, in spite of Hildebrand's wish to make Rome independent of the Empire. At the death of Henry III the Roman nobles and provincial barons, knowing that Germany was now controlled by a weak woman, decided to have a Roman Pope and restore Roman customs. They elected Benedict X; and they then looted the palaces and churches, even carrying off the gold and silver vessels of St. Peter's. Damiani and the strict cardinals fled to the north, and they were there joined by Hildebrand, who had been in Germany. He was now mature in years, and he at once gave evidence of his characteristic and piously unscrupulous ways. He

[1] *Feudal Germany*, 1928, p. 128.

detached a number of Benedict's Roman supporters by bribery, and with a Tusculan-German army drove the Pope and his remaining adherents from Rome. He then, although Benedict was a legitimate Pope, consecrated the Archbishop of Florence under the name of Nicholas II, and through him he issued a decree that henceforward the election of a Pope was restricted to the cardinals, who would merely notify the Emperor of their choice. A string of particularly blood-curdling anathemas was attached to this document, yet Hildebrand imperially ignored it when he was himself elected a few years later.

He then turned to the Norman leader, Robert Guiscard. The famous sea-rovers from Norway had by this time thickly populated the western provinces of France, and many of them were attracted to Italy—the Arabs effectively kept them out of Spain—by the prospect of loot and military employment. Nominally Christians, thoroughly unscrupulous—the noble Viking and his virtuous daughter of our literature are sheer fiction —and the most deadly fighters in Europe, they hired their swords to Moslem and Christian impartially until such leaders as Guiscard secured control of large regions in South Italy and from their castles savagely raided the entire country. In his eagerness for results, however questionable the means, Hildebrand consecrated their possession of South Italy by making Guiscard a vassal of the Papacy: just as a few years later he would consecrate William of Normandy's unscrupulous invasion of England by accepting him as a Papal vassal and England as a fief of the Roman See.

With Norman troops Hildebrand now fell upon the Italian barons who supported Pope Benedict. They appeared at length before the strong castle in which Benedict sheltered, and he was induced to yield on a solemn promise of immunity. Thirty of the Roman nobles, indeed, pledged their lives for the fulfilment of the promise, and Benedict, abandoning Papal dress,

settled quietly at his mother's house in Rome. A month later, Hildebrand sent soldiers to arrest him. They dressed him in the pontifical robes which he had discarded and brought him before the Pope; and, to ensure punishment, Hildebrand had a fraudulent list of crimes put into his hand and ordered him to sign it. In spite of his tearful protests and the sobs of his mother, who was present, he was compelled to sign it, and was committed to a monastery, in which he was cruelly treated until he died. The German prelates thereupon excommunicated Nicholas, but he was dying when the sentence arrived.

The Italians saw with dismay the new Papal policy of relying upon the barely civilized Normans instead of the Germans, and the northern prelates found their own cities plunged into the gravest disorder by the methods by which the puritans conducted their campaign against clerical marriage. Bishops of the monastic school might insist upon celibacy, but even many bishops of regular life, to say nothing of the sensual majority, felt that the prohibition of marriage would lead, as it did, to almost universal libertinage. There was therefore no hope at that time of inducing representatives of the whole Church to agree upon such a law. The new Papal party, in fact, had no idea of seeking such agreement. The Pope's decree was to suffice for the universal Church; and the Church did not grant him that degree of authority. Hence the fight against clerical marriage or concubinage had to be conducted in each region with the usual complete indifference to considerations of honour and humanity. No Pope of the Middle Ages did more than Gregory VII to consecrate in practice the maxim that the pious end justifies the means, his chief rival in this being the second great Pope of the period, Innocent III.

Early in the campaign Hildebrand directed one of his lieutenants, Anselm of Lucca, whom he later made Pope, to compile a manual of Church law which should prove, among other things, that the Pope had the power he

claimed over the universal Church. It was based, of course, upon the Forged Decretals and other fabrications. Several other priests of the group joined in the work of forging, but we will return later to Hildebrand's indifference to truth. Prelates who scorned these fabrications then found their dioceses invaded by ranters who stirred alike pious folk and the dregs of the people to shame, intimidate, and even use physical force upon the married clergy and their wives. To the sensitive reader who resents the word " ranters " let me offer this comparatively respectable passage from one of Cardinal Damiani's invectives against the validly married wives as well as the mistresses of the Milanese priests:—

> I address myself to you, you darlings of the priests, you tit-bits of the devil, poison of minds, daggers of souls, aconite of drinkers, bane of eaters, stuff of sin, occasion of destruction. To you I turn, I say, you gynecæa of the ancient enemy, you hoopoes, vampires, bats, leeches, wolves. Come and hear me, you whores, you wallowing beds for fat swine, you bedrooms of unclean spirits, you nymphs, you sirens, you harpies, you Dianas, you wicked tigresses, you furious vipers. . . .

I find him as difficult to translate as Rabelais, to whom he has in command of coarse language a marked affinity. But this was the mildest weapon. Cudgels and even swords were used. Married priests were castrated and lost their noses and ears; and the armed mobs were encouraged by awarding them the property of married priests, so that feminine garments were placed and then discovered in the houses of innocent priests. Appalling bloodshed and suffering went on for decades in the cities of Italy, where most of the bishops defied Hildebrand. In more distant provinces of the Church, priests, and even the monks in some districts, clung to marriage for more than a hundred years. The " moral " result of it all we shall see presently.

The full and authentic story of what historians now call the " spiritual triumph " of Hildebrand and " the

great reform of the Church" [1] would read like the Yellow Book of the Jews on the outrages which followed the triumph of Hitler. I give a summary of it because the suppression of these truths in most of the new manuals of medieval history completely falsifies the author's valuation of such institutions as the Church, and because this is an essential part of the background of Papal history at this stage. That the reformers had made no impression in twenty years upon the general character was speedily disclosed after the death, from weariness and mortification, of Pope Nicholas.

Disgusted with Hildebrand's auxiliaries, the fierce Norman bandits and the lawless mobs, the Italian barons and prelates now allied themselves with the German Imperialists. They sent the golden crown and the green mantle and mitre of the Roman Patricius to the young German king, and they met at Basle, with representatives of the Roman people, and elected the Bishop of Parma, Cadalus, to be Pope Honorius II. But Hildebrand and his colleagues had, ignoring their own decree about a Papal election, already consecrated Anselm of Lucca, the hated puritan, as Pope Alexander II. There was still so large a majority of the Romans opposed to them that they had to take Alexander stealthily by night to the Lateran Palace. He made Hildebrand his Chancellor and left the fight to him. Hildebrand bribed on all sides, and Damiani spluttered Italian slang; and the chief supporter of Cadalus, Benzo, the wealthy Bishop of Albi, outdid Hildebrand in bribery and equalled Damiani in vituperation. How there had been a reform of the Papal Circle yet so little change in Rome is easily understood. In confining the election of a Pope to the cardinals the

[1] A student of history at a college of the University of London had to write a paper on the reforms of Hildebrand and consulted me. I told the youth (1) the truth and (2) what he would be expected to say. He chose, against my advice, to tell the truth; and the professor angrily scolded him and told him a lot of utterly unhistorical rubbish. I had read every Latin document of the age, and the professor had probably read none.

monkish party had reduced the Papal Circle to a group of thirty or forty clerics who were all appointed by their chosen Pope.

Here is another vignette of life in the days of the spiritual triumph of the Papacy. One day in the year 1062 Benzo, whom they dared not touch because he was the representative of the Empire at Rome, summoned a meeting of citizens in the ruin of the old Great Circus. Probably thirty or forty thousand Romans found places on the crumbling benches—doubtless at one end of the vast arena—as Benzo prepared to state his case for Cadalus. Pope Alexander, who had been challenged to appear, and his cardinals rode on horses into the arena, and Benzo exhausted his ample vocabulary upon this Pope who had, he said, won his election by bribery and the swords of Norman bandits. Alexander made a feeble reply and turned tail, followed by the hoots and jeers of the people, who hated " the monks."

This encouraged Cadalus, the anti-Pope, who came to Rome with a small army and, after a battle in which hundreds were slain, occupied St. Peter's and the Vatican. But just at that time the news came that Archbishop Hanno of Cologne had stolen the boy-king from his mother. Hildebrand stormily congratulated the noble kidnapper and sent Damiani to Germany to ask a solution of the Papal crisis. He was of course to represent both Alexander and Honorius; and, equally of course, Alexander was declared Pope and the supporters of Honorius began to disperse, so that he retired. But next year came the news that Archbishop Adalbert of Bremen had secured the golden boy, and Honorius (Cadalus) returned with a large army, cut his way through the Normans, littered the streets with corpses, and laid siege to the Lateran Palace. He held part of Rome for two years, while both sides bribed lavishly and their supporters fought. Then Archbishop Hanno recovered the royal pawn, and Cadalus retired to his bishopric of Parma, to

discharge his sacred functions in peace. A few years later the Normans themselves took the field against the Papal troops and their allies. They were defeated, and Pope Alexander settled down to the bitter and not very edifying struggle for clerical chastity. He died in 1073; and Hildebrand, who had a few years before secured by terrible anathemas that the election of a Pope should be reserved to the cardinals, gave ear to a popular (mainly clerical) clamour and became Pope Gregory VII.

It was now a quarter of a century since Hildebrand and his princely candidate for the Papacy had knocked, with barefooted humility and the entire might of the Empire behind them, at the Leonine Gate, and the reader may begin to wonder why I chose that year as the inauguration of a period of reform. But as regards the Papacy there was a very definite breach with the Dark Age. Cynical nobles could no longer make Holy Fathers of their vicious sons or greedy relatives. We may say, indeed, that it would be two hundred years before corrupt men would again find their way to the Lateran Palace. What is concealed from their readers by the professors who write a new version of medieval history is that the work of such Popes as Gregory VII was not in fact followed by any moral improvement in Europe; and that these Popes, in their concentration upon securing the power of the Church to make men virtuous, violated the greater clauses of the moral-social code, and so rendered that power futile when they had secured it. The first point will be amply proved in the next chapter, in which we study the morals of the century after Hildebrand. The second occupies us here.

Gregory VII was of peasant stock, but an uncle of his who was an abbot at Rome had given him an elementary education and passed him on to the Lateran School. He was densely ignorant outside of elementary religious matters, and he was not even trained for the priesthood. His outstanding characteristic was energy, and he enlisted

this in the service of two passions: a shuddering contempt of sexual life—not merely of sexual irregularities—so that no priest must be allowed it in any form, and a determination to make the Pope Lord of the World. I have given in the eighth chapter of my *Crises in the History of the Papacy* a full analysis of his letters and his career, and need say here merely that, in asserting the power of the Pope, he recognized the distinction between secular and spiritual matters only to conclude that if he had supreme authority in the latter and greater, it was absurd to question his interference in such trivialities as politics or transferring kingdoms from one man to another. He had an insane dream of making all the Christian countries of Europe fiefs of the Papacy and all their monarchs its vassals. He did not pay the least notice to the justice or injustice of a man's claim to a kingdom if that man would accept a banner blessed by the Pope and pay vassalage, in gold and armed service, to the Papacy; he was entirely callous to the horrors of warfare and whipped princes on to engage in it whenever this was to the interest of the Papacy; and he lied, falsified the documents he quoted, and encouraged his lieutenants to add to the growing mound of Lateran forgeries.[1] He was "the Blessed Peter on earth," he said.

A few examples of his procedure will show why he failed. In the first year of his pontificate he told the Spanish kings, who were at heavy cost recovering bits of Spain from the Arabs, that they were conquering the country for him because—this is the wildest fiction—it was a fief of the Papacy (I, 7). He wrote Philip of France that, if he did not amend his ways, he would

[1] "Even a lie that is told for a good purpose is not *wholly* free from blame," is his nearest approach (*Ep.* IX, 2) to a condemnation of pious fraud. As to bloodshed, he says in another letter (I, 9): "The imprecation which runs, Cursed be he that refraineth his sword from blood, shall not, with God's help, fall upon us." For a long list of his use of forgeries and his falsifications of the documents he quotes see Döllinger's *Das Papsthum* (1892), Ch. II, § 2.

release the French people from obedience to him (I, 35). He scolded Lanfranc, head of the Church in England, for his " effrontery " in refusing to obey a Papal order (I, 31) to come to Rome. He, at the appeal of the Greeks, summoned all Christian princes to send him armies which he and his dear friend the Countess of Tuscany—Europe humorously suggested that that very pious lady was his mistress, which infuriated him—would lead against the Turks; and he admitted to William of Burgundy (II, 51) that he intended to use these armies to crush the Normans, and they *might* afterwards go to the East. He threatened to lead an army in person to punish the King of Leon for marrying a relative (VIII, 2). He blessed a usurper of the throne of Hungary, who promised to be a good vassal, and callously told the deposed king that he deserved his fate by accepting the kingdom from the Emperor instead of the Pope, whose feudal possession—this again is wholly false—it was (VIII, 2). When the usurper went on to seize Dalmatia and promised to pay vassalage to the Pope for it, the Dalmatians were told by Gregory, when they tried to recover their country, that they were " rebels against God " (VIII, 4). He shocked his staunchest supporters Cardinal Damiani and Abbot Didier (of Monte Cassino). On one occasion Didier proposed to punish an abbot who had had the eyes of some of his monks cut out for their sins. Gregory promoted the pious savage to a bishopric.

The grand example in our literature of this supposed triumph of spirit over flesh, which was so good for Europe, is a picture of the Emperor Henry IV kneeling penitently in his shirt on the icy platform of the castle of Canossa until the Pope pardoned him. This story, which we know only from Gregory and the chronicle of a German monk, is generally rejected by modern historians. One of the leading writers on the affair goes so far as to claim that, on the contrary, Henry besieged Canossa

with his army and compelled the Pope to yield.[1] It seems to me more probable that Henry went through some form of penitence and asked absolution, but it was certainly an act of policy and insincerity; and it was the Emperor who triumphed over the Pope.

Henry IV had grown up, we saw, at the court of very unspiritual prelates who fought for the possession of him as women now fight for the custody of a child-millionaire. He is a good, and not rare, example of what the Church really did at this period of reform. He became cynical and fond of gay ladies and companions. He was deaf to the Pope's remonstrances until, in 1074, his Saxon subjects rebelled. He made a pretence of submission as long as the revolt lasted, for Gregory would, on his own principles, help the rebels, but at its close he threw off the mask. He was encouraged by the fact that at the same time the puritans were severely checked and the Imperialists encouraged in North Italy, and a strange outrage was committed in Rome itself. While Gregory was saying the Midnight Mass at Christmas (1075), one of the bandit-barons of the surrounding country strode in at the head of his men and wounded and captured the Pope. He carried Gregory to his castle, demanding the key of the Papal treasury as a ransom, but he seems to have miscalculated the feeling at Rome, and Gregory was allowed to return.

The Pope had for a time temporized with the Emperor. Now he sent a message full of threats, and the German bishops retorted by excommunicating the Pope. We can imagine how his fiery temper reacted when he heard—for the bishops of North Italy sent a priest to read the sentence to him in the Lateran Palace—that one count in the indictment was "scandalous association with women"! Neither Pope nor Emperor knew the meaning of the word restraint. Gregory excommunicated Henry and announced to the world that his subjects

[1] Dr. A. Dammann, *Der Sieg Henrichs IV in Kanossa*, 1907.

were released from their allegiance. The Empire included so many embittered and reluctant provinces that revolt spread at once, and the prelates and nobles seemed to be preparing to depose Henry. Hence the voyage to Canossa, the historical significance of which is entirely distorted in popular history.

By his pretence of submission Henry not only averted the risk of a serious civil war in Germany, but also prevented the Pope from going there, as he proposed to do. As soon as he had left Canossa he returned to his defiant ways and refused to give Gregory an escort to Germany. Gregory set up a rival King of Germany, and during the three years of struggle that followed he stooped to evasions and equivocations which incur the censure of all his biographers. It ended in the defeat and death of Gregory's candidate, and Henry transferred the war to Italy and created an anti-Pope, Clement III. The Romans at length opened their gates to him, and from the Castle of Sant'Angelo the Pope sourly watched the triumph of the anti-Pope. But he had summoned the Normans. They came and drove out the Germans; and then, being taunted by the Romans, they fell upon the city with all the fury of its worst invaders. They looted and burned down a large part of Rome, sold thousands into slavery, and, as usual, violated all the nuns and young women. When they had gone, the Romans turned with burning anger upon their Pope and drove him out. He retired, deserted by all, laden with curses for the violence and folly of his policy, to the Abbey of Monte Cassino, where he died soon afterwards. "I have loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore I die in exile," he said. Even Abbot Didier, his friend, disagreed.

I will not attempt to appraise the character of Gregory VII. Catholics, and many historians, count him the greatest Pope who had yet appeared, but most of us will say that his dream of a United States of Europe with a Pope as President, launching armies whenever he

would, subordinating truth and justice to the establishment of the Papal power, completely indifferent to the welfare of the people, was just a fanatical outcome of the brooding of a neurotic monk of limited intelligence. Monarchs who hypocritically accepted his banner in order to get his influence turned round, as soon as they were established, and said, as William the Conqueror did, that they paid homage to no man. For the inauguration of a reign of justice in Christendom he did nothing; indeed, he blessed many an injustice and military outrage. On the universal simony he made little impression; and, if he went far in the enforcement of clerical celibacy, he made clerical immorality worse than ever. Since, in fine, he was so disdainful of the contemporary movements in art, culture, and social and economic life, which were really lifting Europe out of its semi-barbarism, that he never even noticed their existence, we must conclude that this strongest and most religious of the Popes did nothing for civilization.

What the eulogistic historians have in mind is the fact that he added to the power of the Papacy; but to ignore the facts of the ensuing period and assume that this *must* have been good for Europe is unworthy of an historian. For the Papacy now had every opportunity to prove its beneficence. No barons with "swinish lusts" dominated the Papal circle during the next two centuries. Even most of the corrupt clerics of Rome were weeded out, and a long series of Popes of religious character occupied the Roman See. What Papal Europe was like during that period we shall see presently, but it is advisable to tell here, summarily, the story of the next four or five Popes and see the complete and disastrous moral failure of the Papacy in Rome itself.

These Popes were strict monks of the reformed school, and they were not without ability. The first of them, Victor III, Gregory's successor, was the abbot of Monte Cassino, Didier, who had disapproved of Gregory's

truculence. We have, in fact, two letters in which the Archbishop of Lyons assures the Countess Mathilda of Tuscany that Didier had told him that he proposed to lift the ban on Henry and make peace. Archbishop Hugh, was, however, in spite of his piety, sourly disappointed at not attaining the Papacy, and we may be sceptical.

Didier had, it is true, made no effort to win the prize. There was a long delay after the death of Gregory, and then the puritans bullied the abbot into consenting. But the Imperialists and supporters of the anti-Pope, who had meantime ruled Rome, drove Didier out with such fury that some even pursued him to the coast, and he had to risk sailing in a storm. He remained at his abbey, deaf to all entreaties, for another year. Rome, he knew, was a collection of armed camps, and the partisans of Pope and anti-Pope fought like savages. Robert Guiscard, who had been Gregory's hired protector, was dead, but the Normans gave him a troop, and they conducted him to St. Peter's over a new scattering of corpses. The Romans drove him back to his abbey, and Countess Mathilda, a neurotic virgin of the type that priests love, brought him back and, with renewed carnage, lodged him in St. Peter's. He was evicted after another battle. In short, the shambles, month after month, so sickened him that he retired to his abbey to die.

Such was Rome after the great triumph of spirit over flesh, and we shall now see it sinking deeper and deeper. Rome was in the power of the anti-Pope, and after a delay of several months a group of the dispirited bishops and abbots met at Monte Cassino and elected Urban II, a French monk-noble, as imperious in his ecclesiastical ideal as Hildebrand, but more cultivated and diplomatic. He was, say the biographers, a man of deep piety and lofty character; and he stooped to performances which astonish and disgust every impartial historian.

The sons of Robert Guiscard were absorbed in a savage

fight for the inheritance, so Urban remained in South Italy for a year. Then the victor conducted the Pope to Rome; but Clement still ruled the city, and Urban had to live with one of his supporters on the island in the Tiber, from which he spun his web of intrigue. Papal historians explain that the Normans were now "enervated" and less useful to the Popes. The truth is that they were taking over the advanced civilization of the Sicilian Moslem and were developing a marked degree of scepticism as they realized the contrast between the splendid culture and prosperity of Sicily—which no Catholic writer ever mentions—and the barbaric state of Rome. The Papacy therefore needed new allies, and Pope Urban set out to acquire them.

First he ordered the pious Mathilda, who was now forty-three years old, to marry a German prince, eighteen years old, brother of the Duke of Bavaria, a bitter opponent of Henry. The Pope would see that young Guelf would not expect her to make a sacrifice of the arid virginity of which she was so proud; and he did not explain to Guelf that the marriage would not alter the terms of her will by which she left her vast possessions to the Papacy. It had been rumoured that Mathilda, weary of the fighting, meditated peace with Henry. She now recovered her hostility to the Emperor, and he led his army to Italy. The land groaned again for two years under a war provoked by the Popes and waged with all the old savagery, and it ended in the defeat of Henry by a revolting manœuvre.

Conrad, son of Henry by his first wife, held a command under his father in Italy. He is generally described as a refined and idealistic youth who shuddered at his father's violence, though some German historians hold that he entered into suspicious relations with Henry's second wife, the fascinating Russian Princess Praxedis. What is known is that he rebelled against his father, alleging that Henry had tried to compel him to commit incest with his step-

mother. He fled to the court of Mathilda of Tuscany; and Mathilda then sent a troop to rescue Praxedis from the confinement in which Henry had, on suspicion of loose conduct, placed her in North Italy, and bring her to Tuscany. Henry, who was ageing, retired from the field in deep dejection, and his Papal, Tusculan, and German enemies got together. Urban, who had left Rome at the approach of Henry, returned to it, and the anti-Pope fled; but there was no triumph. Gregorovius, the highest authority on the city, thus depicts his return:—

> Urban II, aged, oppressed, owing the possession of the Papal residence to the gold of a foreign abbot, seated in the deserted Lateran surrounded by rude partisans and no less rude bishops, gazing on the ruins of churches and streets—memories of Gregory VII—and on a city silent as death, squalid, and inhabited by a tattered, murderous, and miserable population, presents a gloomy picture of the decadence of the Papacy.[1]

But Urban still had the spiritual weapon which Hildebrand had forged, and he went on to make an appalling use of it.

He summoned a Council of Italian, German, and French prelates and abbots at Piacenza in the spring of 1095. Three thousand prelates, abbots, and priests, and thirty thousand laymen gathered for it, so that it had to be held in the meadows outside the city. Here Praxedis repeated her statement that Henry had ordered her to commit incest with Conrad and had compelled her to prostitute herself repeatedly in his court and camp. These charges were in themselves ludicrous, for Henry loved his son and was at the time trying to make a kingdom for him in Italy; while he was so jealous in regard to his wife that he had confined her at Verona on suspicion of infidelity. The *Cambridge Medieval History* (V, 146) thus sums up modern historical scholarship about the affair:—

[1] *History of the City of Rome*, IV, 277.

> The Papal party was rapidly gaining strength and, unscrupulous in its methods, worked amongst his family to effect his ruin. The revolt of Conrad in 1093 under Mathilda's influence. . . . His wife Praxedis, suspected of infidelity by her husband, escaped to take refuge with Mathilda and to spread gross charges against Henry. False though they doubtless were. . . .

It is enough that the Pope and the reformed prelates who were now understood to be the standard-bearers of justice eagerly accepted, without any trial or inquiry, these wild statements of "a woman scorned" and an ambitious son, and they declared Henry excommunicated and deposed. To Urban's further plea that they should initiate a great Crusade to recover Jerusalem from the Moslem, they paid no attention; and he later went to France and inaugurated the Crusade at Clermont. But whether that movement was a blaze of chivalry and idealism which proved the reform of Europe we will consider in the next chapter.

Urban was recalled to Italy by sad news. Guelf, the young husband of Mathilda, was in revolt, and his brother, the Duke of Bavaria, had joined Henry and was marching to Italy. We may ignore rumours that Mathilda was angry because Guelf had revealed that she was not as other wives, or that he really desired the middle-aged virago. It is clear that he discovered that she had bequeathed her province to the Papacy, and that he had hitherto been duped on that point. The Normans, however, presently helped by the Crusaders from Normandy and Western France who passed through Rome, drove back the Germans and recovered almost the entire city for the Pope. He found even the Lateran Palace in ruins, and he had to live in the fortified tower of one of the nobles; and when he died there in 1099, worn out and hated, they had to take his body stealthily, by a circuitous route, to bury it in St. Peter's.

Paschal II, another monk, renewed the excommunication of Henry and easily crushed three anti-Popes whom

the Roman Imperialists set up. But the clergy and people of Germany as a body ignored the excommunication, and Henry was spending his last years in quiet enjoyment of the throne when the Papal party resorted to another revolting outrage. Henry's younger son, Henry V, was induced to rebel on the pretext that he could not obey an excommunicated father. Professor Thompson, the leading authority on this period of German history, says that this was "a mere pretext," and that his ambition was spurred by "the Papal partisans and the discontented feudality." [1] The (monkish) Annals of Hildesheim say, in fact, that "as soon as the Pope heard of the conflict between father and son he, feeling that God had inspired it, promised absolution." After an appalling civil war the consecrated parricide, as he virtually was, captured his father by a piece of flagrant perjury and seized his throne. Henry IV died soon afterwards.

But the Pope reaped a bitter harvest. Henry V had promised the Pope, in return for his support in the sordid revolt, that he would surrender the right of investiture—the right of a monarch to invest a new bishop with his crozier and ring and thus in effect to appoint bishops—which it was one of the chief aims of the Papacy to secure, but he at once repudiated the promise, and in 1110 he set out for Rome, to compel Paschal to crown him, at the head of thirty thousand knights. Paschal suggested a compromise to which Henry agreed. The King would renounce the right of investiture, and his prelates would surrender their feudal possessions to the crown. Henry would certainly know that his bishop-nobles would never entertain this idea, and when the treaty was read in St. Peter's, as a preliminary to the coronation, on February 12, 1111, there was a scandalous scene.

Pope and King sat together in the sanctuary. The

[1] *Feudal Germany*, p. 144.

glittering crowd of nobles, knights, and prelates stood before them, and the people filled the body of the church. The German prelates raised an angry clamour, and the swords of the knights flashed in the light. The Pope was seized and imprisoned, and the city was again raped and ravaged. Early next morning—so early that Henry had to fight half-naked—the Romans boldly attacked the German army, and the carnage was such that Henry retired with the Pope and his cardinals as prisoners. He swore that he would slay them all unless the Pope agreed to crown him. So two months later—forty years after Canossa—the Pope yielded to the monarch and made him Roman Emperor. The zealots seethed with anger, and in a Council they repudiated Paschal's promise. The tumult died, and for a few years Paschal attended quietly to the formal affairs of his office. But in 1116 the struggle of the Papalists and Imperialists flamed out more fiercely than ever. From the savage combats and the desecrated churches and nunneries Paschal fled to the hills, and for months he sheltered there from the fury of his " flock." He returned to Rome, to die, in the first months of 1118.

CHAPTER II

THE MYTHICAL AGE OF CHIVALRY

It was now seventy years since the reformed monks had induced the Germans to "purify the Papacy," and in one sense it was worse than ever. Sordid as the previous century and a half had been, there was during these seventy years more, and more savage, fighting in the streets and churches of Rome, far more slaughter and rapine, than there had been during that darkest hundred and fifty years of the Dark Age; and this was entirely due to the policy of the new Popes and their "triumph of spirit over matter." This reform, which so many historians regard as the date when the Popes really began to "curb the passions of men," let loose uglier passions than ever.

By the year 1100, when the superb Arab cities of Spain and Sicily were at the height of their splendour, when the Normans had embraced alike the culture and the scepticism of the Arabs, Rome had sunk back into semi-barbarism. The nobles of the Dark Age had been replaced by nobles who were really nearer to savagery. "The founders of the patrician houses of the Middle Ages," says Gregorovius (IV, 321), "acquired fame and power neither in battle nor on the judicial tribunal, but, living in towers like falcons, like falcons they robbed and killed." So fierce were the feuds between them that for a century they dared not walk the streets except in armed bands. They seized the ancient ruins and out of them built tower-fortresses, one to three hundred feet high, from the narrow windows of which they poured burning pitch or boiling water upon assailants. There were at

one time nine hundred of these fortified towers in Rome, and the desolate spaces between them were constantly reddened with blood. This was after Hildebrand's "great reform" had been in operation more than a hundred years.

We will return to this when we resume the story of the Popes, but my reference to the launching of the First Crusade in France and to the thirty thousand knights of Henry V may have suggested to some that the reform had at least borne fruit outside of Italy: that the famous Age of Chivalry had begun. These developments are usually treated so loosely and rhetorically that no one attempts to explain why the semi-barbarism lingered in the immediate sphere of influence of the Popes if the rest of Europe flamed with idealism. For we shall find only occasional and temporary improvements at Rome until the sixteenth century. Bryce, who will not be suspected of prejudice, says:—

> During the three centuries that lie between Arnold of Brescia [about 1150] and Porcaro the disorders of Rome were hardly less violent than they had been in the Dark Ages, and they were to all appearance worse than those of any other European city.[1]

The Italians, we saw, turned a deaf ear to Pope Urban when he preached the First Crusade, and few of them joined any of the Crusades, for we cannot count certain Normans of South Italy whose motive is recognized to have been purely secular. By what mysterious process of social psychology did the voice of the Popes provoke only derision in Italy, especially in Rome, and kindle this "flame of idealism" in the rest of Europe?

The only real mystery is why responsible historians do not resent the repetition on all sides of what in their expert works they recognize to be an untruth. Not only

[1] *History of the Holy Roman Empire*, 1889, p. 269. The truth is that they were *more* violent, as we have already seen, than during the Dark Age.

was there never an Age of Chivalry, but no authoritative historian—no professor of the last fifty years who is counted an expert on this period (broadly, 1100–1400) of English, French, German, Italian, or Spanish history—has ever said that there was. I shall show presently that they, on the contrary, describe it, each in his own sphere, as so full of treachery, cruelty, dishonour, robbery, callousness, and vice and violence of every description, precisely in the noble and knightly class, that we must pronounce it one of the most immoral periods of history. The expert on a particular period must not make this comparison. As I have in American publications three times covered the ground of universal history, particularly from the social or moral point of view, I may venture to do so. The so-called Age of Chivalry, including the thirteenth century, which Mr. Hilaire Belloc finds the most glorious in history, was farther from chivalry, in the idealist sense, than any other equally lengthy period of civilized history.

The Crusades cannot be discussed here. Experts now recognize that most of the leaders sought only adventure and loot, and what we shall see about the quite general character of the nobles and knights will show the utter nonsense of the romantic accounts of the Crusades which are still used in our schools and our films. It may be useful to give one illustration, since it is based upon research which I have not yet published. It is the story of the part which William of Aquitaine, grandfather of our Queen Eleanor, took in the First Crusade.

William, the First Troubadour and one of the greatest nobles of the age, was famous throughout Europe for his wit, his poetry, and his complete licence of life. He entertained the austere Pope Urban II, but, as he promised to found a large abbey of good monks, the Pope said nothing about his vices and did not insist upon his taking the Cross. This was after the great meeting at Clermont. A few years later he broke up with the

flat of his sword a synod of bishops and abbots who sat to censure the vices of the French King, and his men chased them through the streets. After this he thought it prudent, especially as stories of rich loot were coming from Palestine, to follow the Crusaders to Syria. He substituted the Cross for the nude painting of his mistress on his shield, and, with a large army and "swarms of girls" (the monk-chronicler says), joined with the Duke of Bavaria and the vivacious Marchioness Ida and their armies for the march to the East. Of this brilliant combined force, more than 100,000 strong, only William and a few dozen others survived to reach Syria. And he came home, after spending a gay holiday at Antioch with the Norman Tancred, who had settled there as a voluptuous oriental prince, and drafted the plans of a nunnery in which the nuns and the abbess were to be the choicest prostitutes of his duchy and the ritual to be as blasphemous and obscene as he knew how to make it.

This is a typical story from the early part of the Age of Chivalry. How that myth arose scholars know quite well. It was created by two French genealogists, sycophants of the nobility, of the seventeenth century. If you look in any authoritative work of reference for an account of it, you find that either it is ignored or the editor departs from his usual policy of employing experts and—as in the *Cambridge Medieval History* or the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*—gives a few pages by writers who are better known for their nice sentiments than for accuracy or scholarship. They generally do not go farther back for their authorities than the French historian of a century ago, Guizot; and they do not seem even to have read Guizot carefully. Their sympathetic readers will be surprised to hear that Guizot passes upon the period exactly the same heavy verdict as I have just passed. After a pretty description of the *ideal* of the knight-errant rescuing damsels in distress, and so on, he goes on to say, in the work in which he expressly sets himself

the task of comparing different periods of civilization, and writing with strictly Christian sentiment:—

> Many have said that this is pure poetry, a beautiful chimæra, having no relation with reality. And, in fact, when we look at the state of manners in these three centuries, at the daily incidents which filled the life of men, the contrast between the duties and the life of knights is repulsive. The epoch which occupies us is, without doubt, one of the most brutal, one of the rudest, in our history, one of those in which we meet with the greatest amount of crime and violence.[1]

Yet half our writers on chivalry quote Guizot's description of the ideal as historical fact and do not mention this passage. They betray their recklessness or lack of knowledge when they name the leading models of chivalry. They invariably quote Richard the Lion-Heart and Bertrand du Guesclin; and our official *Dictionary of National Biography* rightly describes Richard as "a splendid savage" in a "semi-savage age," while the French encyclopædia says that du Guesclin was "a brutal soldier all his life." It is the same with the Black Prince, the Cid, Tancred, and all the other heroes. They were great fighters, but men of no principle. Bayard, I may add, lived long after the Age of Chivalry was over, Sir Philip Sidney still later.

It is hardly likely that Guizot was acquainted with an obscure medieval manual in Provençal entitled *L'Ordene de Chevalerie*, or an equally obscure church manual which gives a ceremony of blessing a knight's equipment. He seems to have used as his contemporary authority the *Policraticus* (Book VI) of John of Salisbury of the twelfth century. In discussing the duties of a soldier, the learned Anglo-French prelate tells of "a long-established custom" of the knight, after the blessing of his arms, taking an oath to use them in the interest of the Church and the cause of justice. But he adds at once that the custom is "not observed by many," and he goes on to describe

[1] *The History of Civilization* (Bohn edition), III, 114.

the knights of England and France—he knew them well in both countries—as totally corrupt. "Our age has degenerated and is almost brought to nought," he says; and he is speaking of the early part of the Age of Chivalry, when the First Crusade is said by our romantic theorists to have regenerated the knights. This devout bishop writes several pages on the contrast between the high character of the ancient Roman (pagan) soldiers and the treachery and vices of the knights of the twelfth century! This is confirmed by Lingard, a very orthodox Catholic priest whose *History of England* in fourteen volumes was regarded as a Catholic classic in the last century. "These Christian knights," he says, "gloried in barbarities which would have disgraced their pagan forefathers." [1]

The myth is, in fact, so incongruous when it is applied to English knights and nobles of the period that the insistence on an Age of Chivalry in our school-manuals and popular literature is particularly disgraceful. All our medieval chroniclers, from the monk Gildas, who mentions an Arthur as a local leader of savage troops and so provided the basis of the famous legend of King Arthur, to the Reformation tell the same story. What Gildas really says, in an extant letter to his compatriots, about the Saxon Kings of his time (the eighth century) is that they were

> . . . criminals and robbers, men who have several wives yet are given to fornication, often taking oaths but in perjury, making vows but just as often lying . . . despising the innocent and humble, bloodthirsty, proud, parricides, adulterers . . .

Boniface, we saw, tells the same story in his letters; but

[1] Some will inquire what Mr. Belloc, whom Catholics now consider their chief historian, has to say. In the third volume of his *History of England* he selects the thirteenth century as the Golden Age, and deplores that after 1307 the savage civil wars "destroyed the chivalry of the past" (p. 9). But when you turn back to the second volume, which covers the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, you find no mention of chivalry or of any chivalrous deeds.

these witnesses are never translated as are the more flattering pages of the cloistral Bede.

After the Norman Conquest, which fairly marks the beginning of the mythical Age of Chivalry, the chronicles are darker than ever. In the Norman monk-historian Ordericus Vitalis we have the same picture of comprehensive vice (especially unnatural vice, which the Normans spread over England and France), revolting cruelty, treachery, and greed as in William of Malmesbury, the *English Chronicle*, and all other contemporary documents. William gives an extraordinary account both of the general sexual perversity at the royal court and the savagery with which the nobles tortured the English to extract money from them.[1] They smeared men and women with honey and laid them, naked, in the summer sun for insects to madden them; hung them up by the feet with a fire of dung below them; put them into dungeons with snakes and adders; crushed them in trunks, applied red-hot iron to their feet, and devised scores of original and exquisite tortures to make men yield their hidden money. Several of the Norman kings were in this as bad as their nobles.

From Freeman's *Norman Conquest* and Green's *Conquest of England* to the *Cambridge Medieval History* and Traill's *Social England* none of our authoritative historians ever questioned that this was the general character of the knights, nobles, and, as a rule, kings. Professor Halphen writes in the *Cambridge Medieval History*:—

> Everywhere the barons perpetrated the same excesses, and these usually consisted, not only in robbing merchants and pilgrims, but also in fleecing the peasants, in seizing their wine, corn, and cattle, and in pillaging the property of the churches and abbeys.[2]

If you mean by chivalry the sheen of silk, satin, and gold, the colourful processions of knights, and certain

[1] *Chronicle of the Kings of England* (Bohn edition), Book IV, ch. 1.
[2] Vol. V, p. 593.

superficial forms of courtesy which were learned from the Arabs, there was plenty. But, as Professor Medley says:—

> The gallantry which we are accustomed to associate with the feudal age was only skin-deep, and the brutality of husbands to wives and of men to women quite disabuses us of our notions of medieval chivalry.[1]

The knight-errant of popular literature, who goes forth after prayer to rescue maidens and kill caitiffs, is pure fiction. In real life, as Professor Medley says, if a knight ever met an insufficiently protected maid on the roads, he raped her. The light literature of the time often describes and approves this. But we shall see that matrons and maids were, for the overwhelmingly greater part, as loose as the men.

I trust soon to publish a work in which the development of the myth is traced and a full account is given of the quite general sexual licence of both sexes, and the brutality, treachery, banditry, and fiendish cruelty of the knights, ladies, nobles, and in many cases princes. Here I must confine myself to a few quotations of the verdicts of the leading historians, so that there may be no suspicions that I have, from my study of the chronicles of the time, arrived at some novel and paradoxical conclusion.

There is no difference of opinion. Even the romantic writers, who borrow from each other, break down occasionally when they catch a glimpse of historical facts. Mr. F. W. Cornish, for instance, made one of the last attempts to vindicate the supposed Age of Chivalry, and must have provoked the smiles of historians when he jumbled together as heroes of chivalry "St. Louis, the Maid of Orleans, Gaston de Foix, and Bayard,"

[1] Traill's *Social England*, I, 556. The "brutality to wives" was not a common feature because, as we shall see, the women were generally as hard, cruel, aggressive, and free-living as the men. Read, in Froissart, the account of Queen Isabella taking part, with the bishops, in the council which tried her husband for sodomy and condemned his favourite noble to public castration. She probably assisted with the general public at the execution of the sentence.

and as records of it " the Chronicles of the Crusades, the writings of Froissart and Monstrelet, the stories of the Cid, and the *Morte d'Arthur*." Froissart does not contain an atom of chivalry, Monstrelet (who lived in a later period) only a little, and it is fiction; the Cid was a totally unprincipled brute; the *Morte d'Arthur* is sheer fiction and hardly mentions chivalry. But the most amusing point is that of the Crusaders, whom many would insist on calling heroes of idealism, Mr. Cornish himself says:—

> The heroes of the first Crusade were no exception to the rule of fierceness and even ferocity with which we are familiar in the history of the Norman Kings.[1]

In fact, the only ideal soldier he finds at this stage is Saladin, the Infidel! Another admirer of chivalry, Mr. J. Batty (*The Spirit and Influence of Chivalry*, 1890), says that " history tells us that from the end of the eleventh to the commencement of the fifteenth century . . . crime of all sorts was never so rife, honour was never so disregarded, nor war conducted so brutally " (p. 135).

For the rest of Europe I must be content here to quote the leading authorities; and I shall quote them only when they give *general* verdicts. For every man or woman of this period of the noble class who can be named as of high or even fairly respectable character I could quote fifty who stand out in the chronicles for their utter depravity and savage cruelty. The citation of particular instances instead of general estimates in historical Catholic literature is as dishonest as it is familiar. For Normandy and France from the eleventh to the fourteenth century I could fill many chapters of this book with sketches of the lives of men and women—just as many women as men—of the noble and knightly

[1] *Chivalry*, 1901, p. 114. The heroes of the later Crusades were worse. The religious orders of Knights (Templars, etc.) were founded just because the knights in Palestine were almost wholly corrupt; and the Templars themselves became very corrupt.

orders which would make a modern reader shudder. But it will suffice to quote the general conclusions of Professor A. Luchaire, whose *Social France at the Time of Philip Augustus* (1912) is the highest authority for the period (1180–1223); and I may remind the reader that this is just the time of the greatest of the Popes, Innocent III, and the beginning of Mr. Belloc's ideal age. The historian says:—

> Feudalism seemed to take a ferocious delight in seeing flames consume burghers' houses and the villeins who resided in them (p. 5).
>
> Concerning feudalism as a whole, with the exception of an *élite* class, the habits and customs of the nobles had not changed since the eleventh century. *Almost everywhere* the castellan [provincial baron] remained a brutal and pillaging soldier (p. 249).

Professor Luchaire had already dealt with the eleventh century in Lavisse's *Histoire de France* (II, 20), the standard history of that country, and had said that it was "a world of superstitious and brutal soldiers" and that "the chatelaine [wife of the noble or knight] whom history and poetry describe in the eleventh century is almost always a virago of violent character."

Professor Luchaire's "*élite* class" (as the English translator calls it) proves so small that he dismisses it in five pages, and he explains that he means only that these few men and women of the noble order were more refined or "courteous." In regard to sex-morals they were just as loose as the others. He includes Queen Eleanor, the lady who introduced into England the Courts of Love, a primary principle of which was that no lady should allow marriage to restrain her from indulging a passion for another man than her husband. The chief English writer on these Courts and their period, Mr. J. F. Rowbotham, says:—

> Immorality was fostered as it has rarely been before or since by this exceeding freedom of intercourse, which at any time might bring a fascinating and brilliant

> stranger into the midst of a family circle and give him the privilege of access and intimate communion with every member of it.[1]

But let us complete the quotations from Luchaire about the general character:—

> The great barons and the feudal sovereigns stole like the ordinary castellans (p. 251).
>
> The ideal of the noble who fought was to make a desert of the land of the enemy; and the noble was always fighting (p. 261).
>
> The noble had an untameable antipathy to and profound contempt for the villein: that is, for the serf, peasant, labourer, citizen, or burgher (p. 271).
>
> In the majority of cases the lady of the manor in the time of Philip Augustus was still what she had been in the centuries preceding feudalism: a virago of violent temperament, of strong passions, trained from infancy in all physical exercises, sharing the dangers and pleasures of the knights of their circle (p. 351).

For Germany it is almost enough to quote that temperate and distinguished authority, the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, whose general verdict is:—

> The German nobility possessed, in fact, a perfect genius for disobedience and treachery. They would ally themselves with Bohemians and Slavs, with Danes and Italians, as it might serve their turn. Restrained by no consideration of patriotism, softened by no tincture of culture, swayed by rudimentary passions, simple, violent, and gross, they would neglect all the highest calls of citizenship to serve their greedy ends. . . . The thickest strand of their existence was woven of cruelty, perfidy, and vice; and, when the mailed heroes of Germany rode off to the Crusade, the monk and the peasant breathed a sigh of relief and tranquillity returned to the land.[2]

Professor Thompson (*Feudal Germany*) agrees. He says of the country in the days of Pope Urban and Henry IV that "the nobles like a pack of wolves fed upon the carcases of Church and State" (p. 233). Giesebrecht

[1] *The Troubadours and the Courts of Love*, 1895, p. 106.
[2] *The Mediæval Empire* (2 vols., 1898), I, 342.

and all the greater German historians tell the same story. The ecclesiastical historian Professor A. Hauck (*Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, 5 vols., 1912) not only describes the general banditry and brutality, but has a long and scorching chapter on the state of morals in the ideal thirteenth century; and in this he describes the priests as generally and flagrantly corrupt:—

> No female is safe from the lechery of the clerics: the nun is not protected by her condition, the Jewish maid by her race, the step-daughter from her father. Maids and matrons, whores and noble ladies, are alike threatened. Every place and hour is good for lust. One practises it in a field where he goes about his service: another in a church where he hears confessions: one in a convent, another in a Jewish house. That one is regarded as respectable who is content with a concubine.[1]

Of the standard of character in Italy we have seen so much, and shall see more later, that I need say here only that cruelty, treachery, and licence became worse in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: the Age of Chivalry and of great art, of cathedrals and friars.

And this applies also to Spain. It was not until the Age of Chivalry was over that the knights borrowed from the conquered Arabs the superficial politeness which came to be regarded as typically Spanish. For cruelty, treachery, and looseness of life they were almost the equals of the Italians. The famous Cid hired his sword to Moslem and Christian in turn, betrayed both, and perpetrated horrible cruelties. Jaime the Conqueror is described by his modern biographer, Dr. H. E. Watts, as " perfidious, dissolute and cruel," and his conquests were due " as much to his craft as his valour." Jaime, I may add, had been initiated to knighthood with the full church ceremony, and was very religious. The chronicles tell us that he built two thousand churches and had two thousand mistresses.

These are the verdicts, the unanimous verdicts, of the

[1] Vol. IV, p. 921.

historical experts, the men who derive their information from the chronicles of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. They describe a Europe which is almost totally devoid of the qualities of what we to-day call chivalry. The period of chivalry (*chevalerie*, or, in Germany, *Ritterthum*) meant to them only that the higher soldiers, the knights and nobles, now rode on horse (*cheval*). But they had no more sense of honour or decency than the foot-soldiers. In war they were treacherous and savage; in peace they generally lived by banditry, and they devised the most horrible tortures for merchants, burghers, monks, and nuns who, they believed, had hidden money. Their tournaments, of which we read expurgated accounts, were far more revolting than bull-fights; and " my lady's favour," which our lady teacher romantically describes to her class as a glove or ribbon tied to the lance, was often enough the lady's shift or part of it. Large numbers of knights earned their living by travelling from one tournament to another and killing or disabling an opponent to get his armour and horse, or by cozening money from the richer ladies in return for intimacy.

But what of those famous poems and stories which reflect an age of romance? What of the minstrel, often a knight or noble, singing tender love-songs to refined ladies on the terrace? These things are almost as mythical as the knight-errant. I say " almost " because toward the end of the troubadour movement a few poets did appear who sang of love in the finer sense of the word, and, of course, it is these that are translated for us. The overwhelming majority of the epics, romances, tales, songs, and poems of every description which we have—and we have many large volumes of them—reflect just such a type of character as I have described. They swim in blood, and they praise cunning, treachery, rape, and infidelity. Every writer on them—Gautier, Méray, Nyrop, Schultz, etc.—describes the whole literature as a most extraordinary parade of sexual freedom. In the

later period much of it is refined. In the earlier period the epics, songs, and stories are often revolting. A man (noble) makes his wife cook and eat the heart (in other poems a different organ) of her lover; a lady (noble and married) promises her favour to a knight if he will fight a mortal combat in her chemise and then wear it, blood-soaked, at supper; Queen Philippa—this is an English specimen—tells Edward III she will slit her pregnant body with a knife if he will not make war on her country as she wants.

Much of this stuff was written by aristocratic ladies of the time; for the myth of the coy damsel and the refined châtelaine of the Age of Chivalry is as flagrant as the myth of the knight-errant. "Modesty and delicacy," says Luchaire of the ladies of France, "were as yet unknown," and "each had at least three or four husbands." But the experts on the troubadour literature—all of them—use stronger language. They point out that in the entire literature, French, German, or Italian, the women, young or middle-aged, married or single, are not only unrestrained, but very aggressive. When the knight, if he has any repute in fighting, spends a night at a castle, the daughters and mother quarrel as to who shall share his bed. They shriek like viragoes at the tournament-shambles and fight each other for the victor. But here the reader is likely to be so astonished that I must confine myself to quotation from the masters of the epic and troubadour literature; though Dr. R. Briffault has opened up the subject very ably to English readers in his fine work *The Mothers* (1927, Vol. III).

The leading expert on the French literature is Léon Gautier, a Catholic admirer of the Middle Ages, but the women of the poems are too much for him:—

> It is their blood, the blood that boils in their veins, that rules them. At first sight of a young man they throw themselves at his feet without hesitation, modesty, or struggle, and beg him to satisfy the brutality of their

> desires. . . . If one resists their pursuing attentions, they take advantage of the night and place themselves in the bed of the man they desire. . . . Married women do almost the same, though there are, it seems, brilliant and admirable exceptions.
>
> It is always the woman who attacks: always the man who defends himself. These shameless creatures are all alike.[1]

On the German women of the Middle Ages and the Minnesinger movement the chief authority is Professor K. Weinhold, who draws upon both the light literature and the chronicles. He is just as severe as the French writer:—

> The men gave their wives no example of fidelity, and on both sides marriage was trodden underfoot.
>
> Marriage was regarded as an external arrangement into which one entered for some advantage or other, and there were few cases in which it was respected.
>
> The worm of vice was nourished in the rose of the garden of chivalry and romance . . . its glamour was a flush on the cheeks of a consumptive. . . . Women no longer distinguish between men of quality and shameless scoundrels: indeed, they give their love by preference to the cunning, the coarse, and the brutal, and many offer their love for money.
>
> Conjugal fidelity becomes a joke; lusty adultery and frivolous vice were praised or smiled upon in countless short poems. Both sexes wore the same dress, and shameless figures were used to decorate the tables.
>
> We have torn away the false veil and shown that the dreamy devotion and love were accompanied by the utmost coarseness and immorality, and that in Germany in particular the Minne-cult was soon corrupted.[2]

All other experts on the literature of the time agree; as will any man who reads it in French, Provençal, German, or Italian. And I may add that in the French chronicles especially there are at this period hundreds of noble women who, by comparison, make Cleopatra a chaste patriot and Messalina a respectable woman. They were

[1] *Les épopées françaises*, I, 31–2, II, 53.

[2] *Die deutschen Frauen im Mittelalter*, 1851, pp. 179, 180, 399, 400, and 472.

as hard as granite and as callous as public executioners. The wife of Bernard de Cahuzac (who cut off the hands or cut out the eyes of a hundred and fifty monks and nuns in one convent) " took pleasure in torturing these poor women herself: she had their breasts slit or their nails torn out " (Luchaire, p. 256).

It is, after this, hardly necessary to speak of the morals of the rapidly growing middle class and the common people. The latter, who were still four-fifths of the population of Europe, remained as gross and ignorant as ever, unchanged by " emancipation " from serfdom, insensible of the risen sun of art which gilded the vices, but did not soften the brutality, of their betters. Probably the best way to estimate the morals of the new middle class of merchants, burghers, teachers, and students is to study the rich development of prostitution in these three centuries. One of my social surveys of history is a manual of the history of prostitution (*The Story of the World's Oldest Profession*, 1932), but I will say here only that not even in ancient Rome was the trade as extensive (in proportion to population) or as unblushing as it was in England, France, Germany, and Italy in the days of the great cathedrals.

At London in the fourteenth century the brothels were the property of the pious Lord Mayor, Sir William Walworth. At Rome the Papacy made a large sum every year for several centuries by taxing the women. In France a royal officer took care of the prostitutes of the court; and the prostitutes of the city, who in proportion to population were twenty times as numerous as they are in modern London, had their own chapels and marched under their own banner in the religious processions on saints' days. In Germany the " cathedral-girls "—they sought customers in the cathedrals—were invited to the dinners of the wealthy and to civic banquets; and the brothels were made free, and the route to them specially illuminated, when a prince came with a large retinue.

Bishops, monks, and nuns owned such places all over Europe; and the open-air baths which drew enormous crowds in the south of Germany and France were flagrant centres of open promiscuity.

If the material which I have condensed in this chapter astonishes and shocks the reader, he will, on reflection, perceive that that is precisely the justification for writing it. There are non-Catholics who deprecate the reproduction of these ugly truths; and they then repeat all the myths and legends about the beautiful Middle Ages and the priceless services of the Papacy which Catholics impose upon them, so that their valuation of institutions even in our own time is entirely false. Let it be noted carefully that in this chapter I rely on the published views of the highest authorities, and I quote only expressions of opinion on the *general* character. There is the further use, in fact urgent need, to tell these things, that they expose the extremely untruthful and fraudulent nature of Catholic literature. The writer who is aware that his readers are sternly forbidden to read his critics is not encouraged to be sensitive about the truth of his statements.[1]

[1] An example of this system reaches me while I write this chapter. The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland has, with the permission of the Archbishop of Dublin, published a pamphlet by the American Jesuit, Father Lord (*I Can Read Anything?*), for the purpose of warning young folk against "bad books." After saying that the critics of the Church have "trained, clever, brilliant minds"—another American Jesuit describes me as having "the mind of a peasant"—he goes on:

> And when they are utterly unscrupulous, as, let's say, Joseph McCabe is, and will twist any bit of history to make a case, and pile yarn on yarn to construct a proof, and use fable for fact and supposition for solid argument, what chance has the average reader against them?

This Jesuit is perfectly aware that, in spite of this alleged vulnerability of mine, they have never published a criticism of a single one of the fifty historical works I have written. The English Catholic Truth Society has not included this scurrilous pamphlet in its list. In this country I could ask the opinion of a Court on the matter.

CHAPTER III

THE POPES AND THE ARTISTIC REVIVAL

Those non-Catholic historians or essayists who consider that the Papacy was an important factor in the restoration of civilization in Europe would plead that the Popes, who had such power that they could move armies and bring strong monarchs to their knees, insisted upon virtue and justice, and that Europe did in fact rapidly advance after the middle of the eleventh century. We have seen the deadly reply to the first part of this superficial argument. Chastity was the virtue upon which the more powerful Popes insisted most vehemently; and Europe grew in licence of life until at last the Papacy itself shared, for two hundred years, as we shall see, the general derision of chastity. I have quoted a number of authoritative historians who declare that the period during which the Popes exercised supreme power, from the second half of the eleventh century to the fourteenth century—we may add, to the Reformation—was the most immoral period in civilized history. It is, however, enough for us that the insistence of the Popes upon virtue was singularly futile. I leave to moralizing historians, who regard vice as one of the most corrosive enemies of the fabric of civilization, the paradox that Europe advanced in the same proportion as it grew in licence.

But sexual disorder is only one of the vices which, on the testimony of all the highest authorities, we found to be generally prevalent in the period. We saw that injustice was just as characteristic of the period as unchastity. Few chapters of history are so steeped in cruelty and injustice as that which describes the behaviour

of the Normans when they settled in England; and the Papacy, which had blessed the enterprise, had no censure for the noble bandits. And this behaviour, we saw, was common in every country and worst in Italy. It is ludicrous to attribute social usefulness to the preaching of justice by the Popes in an age when there was over the whole face of Christendom a net of banditry such as we find nowhere else in the history of what is supposed to be a civilized period; and no barbaric invaders ever inflicted such cold-blooded torture as these knights and nobles inflicted upon the men and women, even the monks and nuns, of their own country.

In social respects the preaching of justice was just as barren. The penal system remained barbaric—we find the sentence of castration carried out in the Pope's own city as late as the sixteenth century—and, where there was an improvement in the law and the administration of justice, this was effected by monarchs secularizing the courts, largely for their own profit. The emancipation of the serfs in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is not attributed by any sociologist to Church influence. The serfs were able to buy their freedom because the owners wanted money to go to the Crusades or to purchase the new luxuries, or they were freed in batches by kings or nobles so that they would lend more willing aid in the unending petty wars. The nobles and knights, the highest authorities assure us, had not the least idea of justice to peasants or burghers.

It was customary in war to loot, rape, and kill without restraint, and it became a common practice after taking a town, often after giving a perjured assurance of immunity, to shut the men, women, and children in their wooden houses and fire the town. Froissart describes that hero of chivalry, the Black Prince, so ravaging the city of Limoges that for once this callous priestly chronicler of bloody deeds, who dismisses the Black Death in a few lines, almost blushes. Torture and mutilation were worse than

they had been in the Dark Age. Two Italian nobles invented a system of torture which, while inflicting the utmost pain, would keep a man alive for forty days; a playful parody of the Church's Forty Days of Lent. And it was just in this period that the Jews began to suffer their long martyrdom.

At this stage of our inquiry it is so much more important to study what use the Popes made of their awful power than to follow the succession of pompous mediocrities in the Lateran Palace that we must pursue the theme a little further. Setting aside merely rhetorical claims about virtue and justice, we ask in what precise respects Europe so improved at the close of the Dark Age that we may speak of a resurgence of civilization. The material or economic development we may here ignore. It was the chief cause of such other advances as there were, but even the most desperate apologist has not claimed that it was through the influence of the Popes that the miserable Europe of the Dark Age, with little money in circulation and the most filthy practices even in castles, became the rich and luxurious Europe of Renaissance days. We may, in fact, confine ourselves to a short consideration of the claim that the Papal Church inspired the art which was the supreme achievement of the Middle Ages and the intellectual stirring which led to the establishment of universities, the creation of a fine literature, and the beginning of science.

Nothing, perhaps, seems to the Catholic layman so wanton and outrageous as to reject the claim that his Church inspired medieval art; and his confidence is very widely shared by others. Indeed, the historians who think that they have vindicated the Middle Ages from the libellers of the last century in large part start from this fact of the greatness of medieval art, and say that it is proof that the mind or "soul" of the Middle Ages has been misunderstood and must be studied afresh. Since not a single one of them notices the historical research

which I summarized in the previous chapter or quotes those verdicts upon the general character of the recognized modern experts which I gave, we see again the insincerity of the " new history."

The " soul " of the Middle Ages was ugly. If we are to use at all these antiquated psychological expressions, we must mean the character of the great majority. It would be logical to remind us that there was a St. Louis in one age and country, a Francis of Assisi in another age and country, if we ever said that *all* the men and women were bandits, torturers, and adulterers. No one was ever so foolish. It would be amazing if at least a large number of people who believed in heaven and hell had not acted logically upon their beliefs. If we used the kind of rhetorical argument which these people use, we might just say that a beautiful flower may grow in a swamp, and leave it at that. For that this stretch of European history was morally a swamp can be questioned only by the man who confines his reading to refined writers who suppress ugly historical truths, and thus lead to a totally false valuation of institutions.

It ought to occur even to the inexpert layman to wonder why Catholic lands have been, relatively, so poor in artistic inspiration in modern times; why, for instance, in the one art, music, which has reached its great development in the Modern Age, the Papal Church has inspired comparatively few of the more distinguished composers, for even Beethoven, Mozart, and Cherubini, who supply much of its music, were apostates. Of the historian we expect a more candid appreciation of facts. He ought to know that it is almost an historical law that when a nation rises from the squalor and poverty of barbarism, or even of an elementary civilization, and finds itself in the sunshine of prosperity, it passes at once into a notable artistic phase. We find this in the case of the Greeks who migrated from their rude and over-populated valleys to Ionia and the islands, just as we find it later in the case

of Athens and the Greeks of South Italy. We find it in the first civilizations of the Old World—in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and North-West India—in China and in all the native civilizations of America, in the Persians and the Arabs. The intellectual development, of philosophy or science, comes later.

Since art is concrete and sensuous, this is so natural that Europe, when it rose from semi-barbaric poverty and squalor, was, apart from its religion, bound to pass into a phase of artistic creativeness. It happened that the Churches then had most of the wealth for employing artists and had every interest in making that use of their wealth. And if the historian or essayist who indulges in speculation on art and the medieval soul would first take the trouble to learn what experts on art have to say about the matter, he would find that most of them proceed on these lines, and reject his superficial theory of religious inspiration as decisively as the experts on medieval history reject his Age of Chivalry. In the previous chapter I quoted these in order to show that my own reading of the chronicles had not led me to novel conclusions. Here it is even more advisable to quote authorities; and they will not be men who look at classic art under the influence of Modernism, the disdain of which for medieval art I do not share.

Nine out of ten of the leading historians of art during the last fifty years agree that medieval art rose to greatness after the end of the Dark Age *because* it was released from clerical or monastic control; that in most branches it grew to perfection in proportion to the growth of sceptical frivolity and licence of life; that in the great majority of cases religion was not the inspiration of the artist, but the sensual form in which he was now permitted to express religious ideas; and that art assumed so predominantly religious a form only because the churches were the richest employers of artists. Even the Catholic Franz von Reber says in his *History of Mediæval Art*, which,

since he is an authority on art, claims very little for religion:—

> Art was taken by the laity from the hands of the clergy and the monkish communities and was freed from dogmatic traditions. In poetry, sculpture, and painting the study of nature was cultivated, and in architecture a greater independence and originality soon made itself felt (p. 481).

Luebke, in his *Outlines of the History of Art*, which says all that an expert can say for religion, has, nevertheless, the same feeling about the art of the later Middle Ages:—

> This new spirit, this free movement, is distinctly evident in the various branches of sculpture. Its dimly discerned but eagerly sought goal was the freeing of the individual from the rule of the priesthood, though only in the limited degree consistent with the religious ideas of the Middle Ages (I, 515).

Woltmann and Woermann, in their standard *History of Painting*, are even more emphatic about that great branch of medieval art. Down to the thirteenth century, they say, Europe had only "the painting and sculpture of children," and art then "emancipated itself from priestly dictation"; and in the most frivolous and licentious period of Italian life "the highest beauty, which the gods themselves had, two thousand years before, revealed to the Greeks, now revisited earth among the Italians." I need not quote J. Addington Symonds, but his very secular theory of art is more solidly worked out in one of the most important of recent studies, Élie Faure's four-volume *History of Art* (English translation, 1921). Medieval art, even church-building, he insists, was the work of the laity, not the Church, and was purely human in its inspiration:—

> The church of the clergy was too narrow and too dark, the crowd that was rising with the sound of a sea begged for a church of its own; it felt in itself the courage and the knowledge necessary to build that church to its own stature. Its desire was to have the

> whole great work of building pass, with the material and moral life, from the hands of the cloistered monk into those of the living people (II, 284).

In a word: "Christianity, which until then had dominated life, was dominated by it and carried along in the movement."

But we do not need to be experts to see that the inflated claim of the Catholic collapses like a pricked bladder the moment you reflect upon it. Rome itself, we shall see, had no art for more than a century after the other cities of Italy were full of it—two centuries after other countries had their great cathedrals—and the artists who adorned it when it became rich were rarely Romans, and they lived and worked in an age of gross Papal corruption. Typical of the age is the painting of two beautiful religious frescoes in the Vatican by Pinturicchio. He was one of the least religious and least virtuous of the painters of the Renaissance, and his subject for one of these frescoes was Alexander VI, the most immoral Pope of the age, and for another, Alexander's mistress, Giulia Farnese, whom he represented as a demure Madonna. Less well known, because the English translator of Vasari's famous *Lives of the Painters* has deliberately suppressed the passage, is the story of Giotto, the father of medieval painting. Catholics are enthralled by the frescoes he painted in the memorial church to St. Francis at Assisi. He was certainly an orthodox Catholic, but at the very time when he was "putting his soul" into this glorification of the early friars, he was privately writing poems in which he disdained them.[1] These men were just employed to give a beautiful form to religious ideas. But they painted Venus as beautifully as Mary, and used courtesans as models for the saints.

This is so obvious in the case of sculpture and painting—music, which ought to be so useful to the Church, did not

[1] Crowe and Cavalcaselle give the fact from Vasari in their *New History of Painting in Italy*. Most writers on Giotto, of course, suppress it.

enter upon its great development until the age of Voltaire—that the question of the inspiration of the Church can seriously be raised only in connection with architecture. Here again the conventional view is confused and superficial. People admire, and very justly—I have spent many hours of deep enjoyment in them—the great medieval cathedrals, but when they attribute these to a "lost faith" and say that our modern age cannot build such structures or make such superb stained-glass windows, they are talking nonsense. Cologne cathedral, as it is to-day, was mostly built in the nineteenth century: Rheims cathedral, "the Parthenon of the Middle Ages," has been beautifully rebuilt by a generation of Frenchmen who are to the extent of four-fifths sceptics and materialists. Quite commonly the medieval cathedrals took a century or more to build, and with forced labour—and very heavy grumbling—or labour that was paid about a penny a day. As to the stained glass, even the Catholic architect Pugin snorted at the popular superstition. The coloured glass in Westminster Abbey or Canterbury Cathedral is simply matured by age.

On the other hand, the thoughtful man will, in seeking the real inspiration of this architecture, compare it with the best structures of other ages and peoples. The great mosque at Cordova is nobler than any cathedral in Spain. When the city was taken by the Spaniards, the grandeur of the mosque restrained them from their usual custom of tearing down even the finest Arab buildings, and they brought their most inspired architects to construct a Catholic chapel or choir in the centre of it; and their own Catholic King rebuked them for spoiling a great work of art. But it was not even the inspiration of Islam that had produced the mosque, for the Spanish Arabs were for the greater part wine-bibbers and mockers of the Koran. This truth, that the artist who creates religious work finds his inspiration in his vision of beauty, not in the religion, is supremely illustrated in the noblest

temple the world has ever seen, the Parthenon. It was built in the most sceptical age of Athenian history, and the chief architect and sculptor, Pheidias, was persecuted by the priests for his scepticism.

How little the Popes had to do with this first revelation of a new and sounder vitality in Europe is, as I said, plain from the fact that Rome was the last city in Europe to feel it. At the time when the great Romanesque cathedrals began to rise in Germany, in the eleventh century, Rome was, we saw, not far removed from barbarism. Such churches as it had inherited were shabby and dilapidated. The stone was needed for the thousand fortress-towers of the fighting clans. Its only artist in centuries was Guido d'Arezzo; and he was a provincial monk who had been brought to Rome by the least religious and most frivolous of the Popes on account of his skill in music. And if it be claimed that the Popes really inspired the architectural development through their provincial representatives, the abbots and bishops of the reform movement, a short consideration of the facts disposes of this superficial assumption.

The early phases of both the Romanesque architecture in Germany and the Gothic architecture of France, which developed from it, are obscure. Many experts now hold that the architectural skill of the ancient Romans was preserved through the Dark Age by colonies of builders who, between their periods of employment by the Ostrogoths and the Lombards, lingered in obscurity in the north of Italy and were attracted to Germany when it took a modest lead in restoring culture. However that may be, the earliest notable cathedrals were, as the name of the style (Romanesque) implies, inspired by the ancient Roman style, as modified in the north of Italy. Western Germany was, we saw, the most sheltered and most prosperous part of Europe at the time, and it had received an artistic stimulation by the marriage of one of the princes to a Greek princess and the importation of

Greek scholars and artists. It was natural that the development should begin here.

But those who poetically imagine the cathedrals reflecting the " soaring religious mind " evidently neither know the age nor seriously reflect what they mean. In the preceding chapter I quoted the best authorities on German medieval history, and we learned that the vast body of knights and nobles were as corrupt as elsewhere and the clergy themselves comprehensively depraved. It was the same in France and England during the building of the Gothic cathedrals and abbeys. The moment you reflect you perceive that these buildings could not possibly tell us anything about even the builders, to say nothing of the mass of the people. The inspiration is in the architect alone; and few points in this field are more obscure than the names of the architects of the cathedrals. I have been able only in one case of these Romanesque cathedrals to find the name and character of the architect; and I came upon this accidentally while reading an eleventh-century chronicle. It said that the architect of Speyer cathedral, which has been called " the grandest monument of Romanesque architecture in Europe," was the Bishop of Osnabruck. The title may suggest piety, but he was, in fact, one of the very worldly fighting bishops of the time, equally ready to design a church, a castle, or a fortification. The bishopric merely provided him with an income.

The new art spread to France and England. It will hardly be claimed that there was in these countries a new wave of religious fervour. What was new was that the ravages of the Danes and the Northmen ceased, and wealth began to accumulate in the cities and the abbeys. This was particularly true of Central France, to which—as I will explain in the next chapter—a stream of culture flowed, through Languedoc, from Barcelona and Arab Spain. Indeed, by the opening of the twelfth century the most northern of the great Arab cities of Spain, Toledo,

which at that time had a population of quarter of a million people and superb buildings, was in the hands of Spanish Catholics. This Arab culture had already inspired the cultivation of music and poetry, the Troubadour movement, which first began to refine the grossness of Europe. It was fully established in Paris, in the abbeys as well as in the city, early in the twelfth century.

It was in these circumstances of rapidly increasing wealth, travel, and material refinement that the Gothic style was developed from the Romanesque in Central France in the twelfth century. At first it was the work of monks, though it was taken out of their hands long before the great cathedrals were finished. But writers who talk about the pious monk-architects have studied neither the condition of the abbeys nor the research of modern writers on architecture. The principal and richest abbey in the Paris district was that of St. Denis, and, when Peter Abélard, after his mutilation, entered this about the year 1120, he found it so corrupt that he fled. He and his contemporary Cardinal de Vitry tell us that this was the condition of most of the abbeys; and Heloise says the same of the nunneries. The abbey of St. Denis was reformed for a time soon afterwards, and it certainly had a school of pious architects. But the research of modern students of architecture discredits all the earlier rhetoric about the Gothic style expressing a new flame of faith. It was brought to perfection by purely technical labour extending over a century, and the worldly monk was just as capable of doing this as the unworldly. The vulgar, often indecent, gargoyles carved on some of the cathedrals are as significant as the statues of saints; and if artists who were very far from pious could paint beautiful religious pictures, others could just as easily design cathedrals and carve saints.

I am concerned here only to show that the Popes were neither directly nor indirectly, and not in any degree. responsible for the great artistic movement which is the

chief title of the later Middle Ages to our admiration. It is useless to plead that the Popes were prevented by lack of means from creating in Rome the noble churches which the Catholic faith is said to have inspired elsewhere. In the twelfth century the Papacy was certainly as rich as some of the bishoprics of France and England which raised fine cathedrals, yet Rome had to wait nearly three centuries for an artistic development. The cities of North Italy were two hundred years in advance of it, and this was because there was more civic pride, not a deeper religious sentiment, in them. We have the document in which the Florentine authorities commission Arnolfo to design their cathedral. They thus state their motive:—

> Since the highest mark of prudence in a people of noble origin is to proceed in the management of their affairs so that their magnanimity and wisdom may be evinced in their outward acts. . . .

There were cathedrals which were built, or started, in a temporary religious revival. These are few. Pride built more cathedrals than piety.

Another aspect of the subject must not be overlooked. The modern Catholic, and even the non-Catholic visitor to a cathedral, is apt to imagine that the feeling of awe or reverence which touches him was shared by the medieval crowd. It was not. I mentioned that in Germany prostitutes were called cathedral-girls because they notoriously lingered there to attract customers. They were not forbidden to do this in Strassburg Cathedral until 1521, when Protestant criticism began. The bishop of that city built a brothel, and the Dean of Würtzburg Cathedral was entitled by law to receive from one village a horse, a dinner, and a girl on November 12th of each year. We learn from a royal decree that prostitutes used the cathedrals and churches of Spain to attract men, and lovers made assignations there. Outside of hours of service the cathedrals everywhere were used

for frivolous purposes, and to judge by the extant sermons of Thomas Murner, the friar who was Luther's chief opponent, the sermons often aimed at causing roars of laughter. He used in the pulpit words which a Catholic, if he used them to-day, would be expected to tell in confession.

This attitude is especially seen in the extraordinary licence which was permitted in the great French cathedrals and many others on certain days of the year. Near Christmas was held the Feast of Fools, when a young cleric was clad in the bishop's robes, except that he had a fool's cap instead of a mitre, and put on the bishop's throne in the sanctuary; and the deacons and subdeacons ate puddings on the altar, burned foul rags in the censers, and played cards while a parody of the Mass was celebrated. At the close the vast crowd, the attitude of which may be imagined, drove the priests round the city in carts which were daubed with dung, while the priests amused them with indecent gestures and exposure. It all ended in an orgy of drunkenness and sexual indulgence.

Equally gross was the Feast of the Ass, when "hee-haws" were made instead of responses, and an ass was led to the altar to the accompaniment of lewd popular songs. There was also a Feast of the Drunken Deacons. The worst features of these festivals were modified in the thirteenth century, but the coarseness and frivolity survived until the eve of the Reformation. It is inconceivable that a population with sentiments anything like those of modern Catholics should enjoy or permit this use of the cathedrals and churches—it was done also in the chapels of abbeys and nunneries—even for one day. Many of the miracle plays also were very gross. The new intepretation of the soul of the Middle Ages and its religious art disdains to notice such facts as these.

It was, in short, inevitable that medieval art should very largely assume a religious form. A religion that was richer in sensuous forms than in purely religious sentiment was

half the life of the people. But, as in ancient Greece and Rome, where also the finest artistic monuments and statues were religious, it was generally civic pride that called for the expenditure. Architects and sculptors did just as fine work on civic halls and palaces. Painters were as inspired in presenting their models in the nude as when they, to meet a religious commission, dressed them in the robes of Mary or the Magdalene. It was the same in every civilization. Chinese art is as inspired as medieval art, but it is rarely religious. Pre-Islamic Persian art was exquisite in a score of forms, but it raised few temples. The secular Velasquez was as great as the pious Murillo; and in Italy Fra Angelico and Raphael and their like were the minority. If Europe had, like China, had an atheist social leader, as Kung-fu-tse was, it would still have had a great art.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTELLECTUAL AWAKENING

MUCH more important is the question of the relation of the Papacy to the new mental vitality of Europe which began in the eleventh century. The artist may indignantly protest that you cannot fill with beauty the world in which people live without a notable result in the refinement of their sentiments and character. But, if we prefer our history written in terms of fact, we must admit that the medieval artistic movement had not that effect. Men and women of the noble class began, after centuries of incredible filthiness, to wear washable under-linen, to have baths, to substitute carpets for the straw, fouled by man and dog, with which they had strewn their dining-halls, and so on; but after what we have seen about their sentiments and character we shall hardly admit, except in a very small class, any refinement of these. The intellectual awakening, on the other hand, was destined to lead, after centuries of struggle, to two results which are among the vital elements of our modern civilization: science and universal education.

If we ask what share the Papacy had in this recovery of mental vitality, we must again distinguish between the personal action of the Popes and the work of their provincial representatives. When writers attribute to the Papacy a very important part in the restoration of civilization, their readers naturally conclude that the Popes must at least have encouraged, if they did not inspire, the new system of schools, universities, and critical inquiry; and Roman Catholics often assert this. It is wholly and flagrantly false. Europe surged into the

fierce intellectual activity of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries without the assistance of the Popes. We shall find these so entirely absorbed in quarrels about their territory with the Germans, the Normans, and the Romans themselves that they never even notice the new development; except when a heretic is important enough to have his heresy explained to them. If we here resume the story of the individual Popes, we shall see that a claim that they promoted the mental awakening of Europe is a particularly bold misrepresentation of the facts.

We suspended that story at the point when, in the year 1118, Pope Paschal II wearily laid down his burden, after nearly twenty years of futile struggle against Henry V. His successor, Gelasius II, was even less disposed to consider the new school-movement. He was an aged and sickly monk whom the cardinals brought furtively from the abbey of Monte Cassino and secretly elected in a Benedictine monastery at Rome. As soon as the news spread, the Frangipani, the most powerful family of baron-bandits and staunch imperialists, rushed from their towers and invaded the church. Their leader, Cencius, caught the Pope by the throat and threw him to the floor. He is said to have trampled upon the old man. He, at all events, dragged him from the church and chained him in one of his towers and, when the Romans released him, sent word to the Emperor. The Pope and cardinals took ship in the Tiber to escape by night, the pro-Germans following them with arrows and stones, the vessel rolling and pitching in a storm. When they reached a port down the coast a cardinal had to carry the Lord of the World on his back from the ship. But when Gelasius heard that Henry V had declared his election void and had set up an anti-Pope, Gregory VIII, he stole back into Rome and was locked away in the tower-fortress of a supporter. One day he foolishly ventured to visit a chapel in the Frangipani district, and their men broke into it and desecrated it

with a murderous fight. Somebody put the Pope on a horse at the back door, and, vestments flying, he made off alone; and in the evening some women found him wandering dejectedly in a field in the suburbs. He was shipped to France, where he died in a few months.

Our only quarrel with Gregorovius when he says that the next Pope, Calixtus II, another strict monk, "found Rome sunk in a state of barbarism that must have moved him to despair" is that Calixtus did not know Rome at the time of his election, and he was not the type of man to despair. Since the cardinals were in France, they had elected a French monk-noble who, on becoming Pope, adopted the tone of a prince. He at once summoned a great Council at Rheims, where he sat on a throne at the door of the cathedral before a vast crowd which included the French King and court, and they passed the usual ineffectual resolutions that there was to be no more simony and no more clerical unchastity, and that the Truce of God—a periodical holiday from fighting—must be observed. He went to the frontier to meet Henry V, and their representatives agreed upon the terms of a reconciliation. For some reason Henry disavowed them, and the Pope, excommunicating him and declaring his subjects free to rebel against him, made a triumphal journey across France and Italy to Rome. The anti-Pope fled, but Calixtus himself went with the troops under the command of a cardinal to seize him. The next page rather mitigates our feeling that the monk-Pope was a man of serene spiritual dignity. He stooped to the vulgarity of compelling the anti-Pope to ride on a camel, his face to the tail, dressed in a goatskin and with kitchen utensils hung about him, in his triumphal procession through Rome. Gregory was imprisoned and cruelly treated until he died.

Calixtus brought to a close the long quarrel about investitures which had been the chief pretext of the deadly and demoralizing feud of the Popes and Emperors. Since

the appointment (or investment) of bishops and archbishops by the secular monarch was one of the chief reasons why so many prelates were nobles or courtiers of very unedifying life, it was inevitable that reforming Popes should make a stern fight to abolish the practice. But there was another side of the matter. These prelates had, and the Popes insisted that they should have, as large a share as other nobles in the secular administration and the royal council. It was a clear case for compromise, and all Christendom now demanded that a compromise should be found. In the Concordat of Worms (1122) the struggle, which had brought appalling misery upon Italy, ended in this fashion. The Emperor surrendered the right of investiture, but the election of a bishop must take place in the presence of his representatives, so that he had a power of veto. Three out of the five years of the pontificate of Calixtus had now passed; and we need add only that he spent the remaining two years in attempting to restore order in Rome.

Papal historians tell with pride how he destroyed many of the fortresses, how he won over (by gold) many of the hostile barons and exiled others, but in fact passion flamed out worse than ever when he died, and Rome passed into another long period of barbarism. Again we notice the fallacy of those who argue that apart from a few " bad Popes," whose antics may now be forgotten, the Papacy means a series of men of rare power and exalted ideals who *must* have had a beneficent influence upon the life of Europe. It is only by concealing the actual historical record that these things can be said; and such periods as that which we now cover explain the futility of the " good Popes." All the Popes who occupied the chair from the middle of the eleventh to the end of the thirteenth century were pious men of regular life, yet the city of Rome made almost no progress—socially, intellectually, or economically—while nearly the whole of the rest of Christendom moved to a higher level.

The writer who throws the blame for this upon the Roman barons or people is in effect asking us to believe that the Popes "curbed the passions" of men everywhere except under their own noses. The broad explanation—we shall see special reasons in the case of the more powerful Popes like Innocent III—is that the spiritual influence which they might have exerted was paralysed by their preoccupation with their fraudulent claims of Temporal Power. The long and disastrous struggle over investiture, which was also a quarrel about territory, was succeeded by an even longer and more disastrous fight for the secular rule of Rome and the Papal possessions in Italy.

The factions in Rome marshalled their forces while Pope Calixtus lay dying. The Frangipani had their candidate in the wings, their opponents a rival candidate; but the latter did not like the alarming prospect and he withdrew. Honorius III then held the office during five or six relatively peaceful years, since his powerful patrons dominated the city. All that need be recorded of him is that he launched many brave anathemas against men who held Papal territory, and they took no notice.

The electors prepared for a sterner struggle when the news spread, in 1130, that he was dying. Some chroniclers say that they did not wait until he was dead; others that they buried his body before it was cold and rushed to the election. The cardinals were divided. Sixteen of them, in alliance with the Frangipani, elected Innocent II. But there was a formidable rival in a son of the wealthy Pierleoni family whose gold flowed more freely than that of the Frangipani—some of these, in fact, were won over—and thirty-two cardinals made him Pope Anacletus II. In the dust of the passionate struggle which followed we do not clearly see the character of either man. According to Innocent, his rival had Jewish blood in his veins—this seems to be true—and had been

so unscrupulous in acquiring a fortune to buy the Papacy that he had melted down the gold and silver vessels of the churches. Innocent's supporters added that Pope Anacletus raped nuns, had a prostitute for a mistress, and had incestuous relations with his sister and other relatives. What we do know is that the supporters of Anacletus broke open the doors of St. Peter's, the Lateran, and Sta. Maria Maggiore and handed out treasure to their followers. Rome rallied to Anacletus, and Innocent fled to France.

Here the historical background again becomes important. While Rome remained semi-barbarous—of the sixteen Popes of the twelfth century only four were Romans, so scarce were decent candidates—France was now lit from end to end by a spirited school-life, with thousands of wandering scholars, and the artistic gaiety of the troubadour movement.[1] Among the crowd of prelates and abbots who greeted Innocent in France was the famous Abélard, who was already near the end of his brilliant career; and it illustrates the Pope's indifference to intellectual matters that, although Abélard had already been condemned for heresy, he was received with distinction by Innocent and his cardinals. From the beginning of the century thousands of gay students had attended the schools of Paris, and a network of schools of every grade covered the country. Two other great figures were just approaching the beginning of their public career. One was Arnold of Brescia, pupil of Abélard, who, though strictly orthodox in doctrine and an ascetic in life, was soon to alarm the higher clergy and incur the hatred of the Popes by demanding that the clergy should surrender all wealth and power to the laity, and that the pomp and tyranny of princes and nobles should be abolished. The other figure was the stern monk Bernard of Clairvaux, the fierce opponent

[1] A full picture of the schools and the morals of the city of Paris and the clergy will be found in my *Peter Abélard* (1901).

of both Abélard and Arnold—though he agreed that the Popes ought not to have a Temporal Power—and far more powerful than any Pope of the century. He espoused the cause of Innocent, and eventually secured his triumph.

Anacletus had in the meantime turned to Roger of Sicily. The Normans were now masters of the island and of a large part of South Italy which the Popes claimed as their territory. I earlier contrasted the high civilization of Saracen Sicily with the barbarism of Rome, and the contrast was now greater than ever. Rome was little if at all changed, but the Normans had taken over and promoted the advanced culture of the Saracens, and the cities were almost as brilliant as those of Spain. It was a Sicilian-Arab architect of this period who built the noble tower, the Giralda, which rises above Seville to-day.

Roger had adopted the title of Duke, and coveted the title of King, of Sicily. This title Anacletus conferred upon him in 1130 as the price of alliance. The alliance was not devoid of cynicism. The adventures of his completely unscrupulous mother and the lessons of his own Moslem tutors had made Roger a sceptic. He was, says Count von Schach (*Die Normannen in Sicilien*), "the greatest man of his age"; a fine statesman, a distinguished patron and student of science and philosophy, and head of the richest, most luxurious, and most learned court in Europe. It was, we shall see, one of the chief sources of the resuscitation of art and culture in Italy. But Roger preferred the ethic of the more liberal Moslem to that of the Pope. He had several large and choice harems; and once, when he heard that an abbot of great virtue sourly complained of his ways, he sent one of the most beautiful of his mistresses to seduce the man. Such was the reigning Pope's new ally; and the list of the spiritual as well as secular distinctions which Anacletus conferred upon him is amusing.

But Bernard won most of Christendom for his rival, Innocent, and the German King Lothar brought an army to Italy, on the customary bribe of an offer of the imperial crown. Five years of warfare followed, but Lothar died in 1137 and Anacletus in the following year. St. Bernard came to Rome, and between his pious exhortations and the Pope's gold the opposition was destroyed, and the Church united in the Lateran Council of 1139. This success prompted Innocent to make a foolish move. He led an army against the Sicilians, and they captured him and induced him to recognize Roger. This surrender of the Papal estates in South Italy angered the Romans, and they seized the occasion, in 1141, of some unpopular act of the Pope, to declare that henceforward they would rule their own city. When Innocent died, they secured the election of a pupil of Abélard and friend of Arnold of Brescia. Celestine II was the only Pope of any real culture and liberality in that century, but he died in five months, and the story of the Papacy passed into a peculiar phase.

Writers who praise the tranquil docility of the Middle Ages and assure us how deeply the people were attached to their autocratic institutions, spiritual and secular, do not mention the fact that for the next fifty years—indeed, in some form the struggle lasted nearly two centuries—the Roman people fought their Popes, with whom most of the nobles were now allied, in an effort to secure independence and democracy. Arnold of Brescia had not yet reached Rome, but the cities of North Italy were winning or exacting charters of self-government, and the Romans followed their example. They declared Rome a republic and drafted a new civic constitution; and they demanded that the new Pope, Lucius II, should surrender his claims to territory. He refused, and in leading his Papal militia in an attack upon the republican stronghold, in the second year of his pontificate, he was struck by a stone, and died a few days later.

The Papacy had been so impoverished by its loss of territory and its incessant troubles that there was no longer a fight for the prize. It was awarded to a monk-follower of St. Bernard: a man of so low a grade of intelligence that Bernard himself was astonished. When, however, Eugenius III went in procession to St. Peter's for his consecration, the Senators refused to let him pass until he recognized the republic. He fled to the provinces, where he remained eight months. A division in the popular party permitted him to return, and he compromised with the leaders of the people; but he soon had to fly again, and he remained in France two years. Some day an historian may count for us the number of times in two centuries the Romans expelled their Holy Fathers, and how many years they spent in exile. With the support of the Emperor, of French gold, and of the eloquence of St. Bernard, Eugenius was again admitted to Rome, and again expelled. He did not even die there, though the last six months of his eight years' pontificate were spent in the comparatively peaceful discharge of his duties; and all that need be said about his successor is that he also spent some fifteen months in the technical activities which do not interest us.

Very few Romans, as I said, were found fit for the Papal office, and the choice next fell upon an Englishman, Nicholas Breakspear, who became Adrian IV (1154–1159). He had begun life as a barefooted beggar-boy, and had by his ability and energy won a distinguished place among the churchmen of his time. But he is hardly a great figure in English biography. His two most notable acts were that he sanctioned the wanton British conquest of Ireland, alleging that it was a Papal fief, and that he was virtually the murderer of Arnold of Brescia.

The Romans demanded that he should confine himself and his court to the Leonine City across the Tiber, and they still held the whole of Rome. Adrian retorted that

they must expel Arnold, and, taking advantage of the assassination of a cardinal, he, for the first time in history, laid an interdict upon the city. Under this awful suspension of all their religious life the democrats soon yielded; especially as the new German King, the ferocious Frederic Barbarossa, was marching upon Italy with an army. Arnold fled and the Pope begged the King to capture and deliver him. Frederic brought him to Rome, where the reformer, in character one of the greatest men of his age, was condemned by the clergy and handed over to the secular arm. He was hanged, and his body was burned so that the Romans might not even pay respect to his remains. He had been the most consistent Christian in Christendom, the one man who told the Popes, more plainly than St. Bernard did, why they had so much power yet so little influence for good; and they had slain him and treated his body as if he were a diseased hog.

Adrian, like most of his predecessors, got little profit by his arrogant and truculent policy. "Would that I had never left my native land," he said to John of Salisbury. When he crowned Barbarossa in St. Peter's, he forbade the Romans to cross the river or come near the church. They came in arms, and they fought the German army so valiantly that a thousand of them were killed, and the sacred area was once more red with blood. Yet the Emperor reduced neither the Romans nor the Sicilians for him; and when the Pope, in despair, made peace with the Sicilians, against whom he had solemnly sworn a pact with Frederic, the Emperor angrily denounced the Papacy to all Europe for its greed and treachery, and he marched upon Rome. Adrian escaped his vengeance by dying, but his policy had once more demoralized the Papal Court with an acrid feud of Imperialists and anti-Imperialists. Italy entered upon forty further years of suffering, and was racked with a savagery equal to any that had been perpetrated in the Dark Age.

It is not my purpose here to amuse the reader with picturesque details about the medieval Popes, but to show that they not only did not, but were totally unfitted to, contribute to the restoration of civilization in Europe. The thirteenth century we shall consider in the next chapter, but the intellectual vitality which began in the eleventh century was, in so far as it was a sound human development, almost at its height by the end of the twelfth century. Yet we shall find the Popes during the remainder of the century absorbed in a more violent struggle for their material "rights" than ever. We shall further see that the very real progress which Europe made in art, culture, economic prosperity, and social reform (the independence of cities, emancipation of the serfs, growth of a middle class, etc.) did not include the one form of improvement which Papal influence ought to effect: moral improvement. We shall find the German Emperors more savage and more treacherous than ever; and this new infection of Italy is one of the reasons why a quite barbaric callousness and cruelty lingered in the country through all the artistic and cultural splendour of the Renaissance. We shall find the Romans themselves as barbarous as at any period of the Dark Age, and the greed of the Papal Court, which was already a byword in Europe, worse than ever.[1]

Pope Alexander III (1159–1181), who succeeded the Englishman, had the second longest pontificate since the establishment of the Roman bishopric, and he is esteemed even by so neutral an historian as Gregorovius "one of the greatest of the Popes." This may seem a strange

[1] When in 1120 Abélard proposed to appeal to Rome for justice, Prior Fulques disdainfully wrote him: "Hast thou never heard of the avarice and impurity of Rome? Who is wealthy enough to satisfy that devouring whirlpool of harlotry?" Abbot Suger of St. Denis tells us of the astonishment of the monks when Paschal II visited them and "expressed no affection, contrary to the Roman custom, for the gold, silver, and precious pearls of the monastery." But we shall see plenty of this presently, and I need not heap up authorities.

introduction to a period of demoralization, but of his twenty-two years Alexander spent eighteen in a bitter struggle with the Emperor, and fifteen of these years were passed in exile. Indeed, he died in exile, and, when his body was brought to Rome, the citizens stoned the coffin and it had to be buried secretly. It is therefore hardly likely that he did much to promote the enlightenment and progress of Rome and Europe. His Papal career began in violence and, however religious his intention may have been, in bribery; for no historian doubts that he and his supporters paid out much French, English, and Sicilian gold to outweigh that of the opposing faction. "Whenever a buyer appeared, Rome showed itself venal," says his contemporary biographer and admirer, the Cardinal of Aragon.[1]

At the death of Adrian the cardinals had met in St. Peter's for the election. The majority were anti-Imperialists, but Rome dreaded the choice of a man who would defy the terrible Barbarossa, and they wrangled for three days. The great majority nevertheless voted for Cardinal Roland, an anti-Imperialist who took the name of Alexander. When he murmured the usual formula that he was unworthy, one of the opposing cardinals, a man of handsome presence and very popular in Rome for his liberality, proposed to take him at his word. He and his friends had another cope, or purple mantle, ready, and they hastily put this upon him: so hastily that they put it on back to front, and there was a roar of laughter. Troops with drawn swords then entered the church and escorted the anti-Pope, Victor IV, as he called himself, to the waiting crowd in the city. And Alexander the Unworthy at once began a most spirited fight for the Papal throne. St. Peter's was at this time not the shrine of gentle piety which many

[1] This sketch of the life of Alexander (Migne's *Patrology*, Vol. CC, cols. 11–60) gives all the extraordinary scenes and details which follow.

imagine, but a heavily fortified building with catapults on the roof. There they sustained a siege for ten days, Victor leading an armed body against them, while the women and children lined the route and filled the city with ribald cries. This was a hundred and ten years after " the reform of the Papacy." The Emperor proposed that the matter should be settled by a Council, and, when Alexander refused, Victor was declared the legitimate Pope. Alexander was driven from Rome and, after scattering a shower of anathemas, he went to France.

It is claimed for Alexander that he raised the prestige of the Papacy by bringing the fiery Barbarossa to his knees and compelling the equally fiery King of England to do penance. I have carefully read the hundred eulogistic pages which Mgr. Mann devotes to Alexander, and it is clear that we may without injustice confine ourselves to these achievements of the Pope. There was no spiritual triumph in either case, and in both cases the apparent triumph was followed by worse evils. Dean Milman devotes a hundred pages of his *History of Latin Christianity* (Vol. V) to the quarrel of Henry II with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas à Becket, and he shows that, as " the gold of England was the strength of Alexander," that Pope vacillated shamelessly, and what support he gave to the archbishop was " in exact measure to his own prosperity or danger." The *Cambridge Medieval History* (V, ch. XVII) and all authorities support this. When the archbishop was murdered the Pope professed to accept Henry's oath of innocence, and the penance he imposed—for the whole of Christendom was shocked—was ridiculously light. To the moral condition of the English clergy, who were, both higher and lower, astonishingly corrupt, he paid no attention, and he did not dare to rebuke the notorious vices of the King. In sexual conduct Henry was totally unrestrained: his rages were such that he used to roll on the floor and bite;

and he used to " curse God in wild frenzies of blasphemy." The Pope vitally needed his support, and reserved his moral indignation for hours of quarrel. It must not be forgotten that the King of England then ruled not only that country, but even more of France than the French King did.

The quarrel with the Emperor, though a quarrel was inevitable since Frederic supported the anti-Pope and gave him two successors during the pontificate of Alexander, was scarcely more honouring to the Pope. Victor died in 1164, and, though his place was taken by Paschal III, the man had not the impressiveness of Victor, and Alexander's representative won a large part of Rome from him by the use of the French and English gold which the Pope sent from France. Alexander returned to Rome, and, since the Romans, who still ruled their city, were as hostile to the Emperor as he, there were three comparatively peaceful years.

Then the Emperor, who had reduced Northern Italy with terrible severity, reached Rome. Barbarossa (Red Beard) was by no means the worst of his line. Contemporaries observe with praise that when he took a town he allowed the women and children to leave before he burned it down (with the men inside), and that, if a town surrendered on a promise that he would spare them all, he kept his word. That is almost the nearest approach to chivalry in the Age of Chivalry. But he had to spend thirty of the forty years of his reign crushing revolts in Italy and Germany—where there was not even a rudimentary sense of honour in the great nobles—and he perpetrated the same barbarities as other commanders.

He reached Rome in 1167, and occupied the Leonine City, or the Vatican extension of the old city. St. Peter's was so strongly fortified that it held out for eight days against the German army, and its garrison ceased to fight only when it was threatened with fire. The Germans then cut down the doors with axes and hewed their way

to the altar through the Papal troops. Next day, when the mounds of corpses and pools of blood had been removed, Frederic installed his second anti-Pope with great pomp. He again invited the Popes—quite illegitimately of course—to submit their rival claims to a Council, and, when Alexander refused, the Romans themselves begged him to abdicate or leave.

He began his second long exile; and even when the plague so decimated the German army that Frederic had to retire, the Romans still contemptuously refused to receive him. They laughed at both Popes, and governed the city themselves until, ten years later, Frederic was defeated by the cities of North Italy and, on that account alone, they made peace with Alexander and permitted him to settle in Rome. Within a year the Romans again expelled him, and he spent his last two years in exile; and they pelted with mud and stones the coffin containing the body of "one of the greatest of the Popes" when it was brought to Rome. There was no public funeral.

The five Popes who fill the remainder of the twelfth century were men of no distinction and little interest. Indeed, only two of them lived in Rome. The Romans had a long-standing feud with the neighbouring town of Tusculum, once the firmest support of the Popes, and still their first refuge when they were expelled from Rome. They again savagely attacked it, and those who fancy the Popes as stern, uncompromising moralists would be interested to read the character of the ally whom Pope Lucius III summoned to assist the Tusculans. He was one of the many German fighting and roystering archbishops of the time. Though Archbishop of Mainz, he was a hard-drinking soldier who kept a harem of beautiful girls. The Romans took Tusculum and spread devastatingly over the Papal States. In one place they captured twenty-five priests. They cut out the eyes of twenty-four, put cardinals' hats on their heads, and ordered the

one uninjured priest—though some chronicles say they put out one of his eyes—whom they labelled " Lucius III Traitor," to lead them to the Pope.

Urban III never reached Rome; and when he wanted to excommunicate Frederic, the citizens of Verona, where he lived, threatened to turn him out if he did so. Gregory VIII lasted three months. Clement III made peace with the Roman democracy and spent two years in the innocent technical duties of a pontiff. Celestine III was forced, much against his will, to crown Henry VI, the half-savage son of Barbarossa (who was drowned), and when the Romans refused to permit the ceremony unless Tusculum was handed to them for complete annihilation, Pope and Emperor basely consented to the outrage. Celestine, for reasons of policy, refused to condemn the treacherous capture and disgraceful imprisonment of Richard the Lion Heart, for which Richard's mother, Queen Eleanor, wrote him the most scorching letters that any woman, if not any man, ever addressed to a Pope; and he did not excommunicate Henry until, in an orgy of savagery in Sicily, he included bishops and archbishops among his victims. He died in 1198, last of the long series of Popes who by their obstinate struggle for temporal power and possessions kept Rome in a state of barbarism while the new life animated more fortunate provinces of Christendom.

If we now retrace our steps and consider the intellectual awakening of Europe in the countries where—far from Rome—it actually occurred, we recognize that it was predominantly a secular development. The historian who is too lenient to the Papacy represents the movement as an expansion of the system of episcopal and monastic schools. It was the obvious duty of the Church to insist that there should be schools in connection with the residences of bishops and the larger abbeys if the priests and monks were to be able at least to read ritual and religious books. The vast majority, however,

neglected this. The decrees of Charlemagne emphatically state this in the ninth century, and all historians of education agree that his order was evaded during his life and ignored after his death. Until the eleventh century the situation remained the same, and to quote the schools of a few exceptional abbeys—Monte Cassino, Bec, Cluny, Fulda, etc.—in which the sons of princes as well as monks and priests were educated, is most misleading. More representative is the abbey in Brittany of which Abélard became abbot. He tells us that he found the monks—all married, half a century after the Hildebrand reform—sensual and illiterate, and, when he reproved them, they tried to murder him.

Where we first find a real expansion of the school system is in the south of France. In the second half of the eleventh century, as I found in studying the career of William of Aquitaine, the western half of Southern France had numerous schools in its thriving towns. But the eastern half, Provence, was so clearly the source of this culture, art, and prosperity that to-day a hundred people know the name of Provence for one who ever heard of medieval Aquitaine. This more advanced life of Southern France about the year 1100 can be traced to an earlier period, and at the same time we very clearly perceive its source.

We saw that Pope Silvester II (Gerbert) was the only Pope in a thousand years with any other than ecclesiastical learning. Gerbert was the son of a French serf and had received a primary education in an abbey near his home in Southern France. The abbot had got his own learning from Barcelona, and the boy was sent there to study. At this time Barcelona was considered part of France and was Christian, but it was within easy distance of and in constant communication with Valencia and other great Arab cities. Cordova was then, about the middle of the ninth century, in its prime, and its fame for learning had spread over Europe. Even a nun in a convent in Saxony

refers at this period to " the splendid city of Cordova." Its colleges were renowned, especially for the study of science; the education was free; and, as the Arabs were tolerant and sceptical except when Moorish fanatics from Africa obtained power, Christian visitors were freely admitted. Gerbert studied in these schools of Cordova,[1] and he took his Arab learning to the north of France, to Germany, and—with dire results to himself—to Rome.

Gerbert was a premature and entirely futile apostle of Arab science; and that the more successful pioneers of the twelfth century got their ideas from Spain Professor Haskins freely admits. Here we have, even in the tenth century, an easy channel for culture from Spain to South-eastern France, and it was along this open channel that, in the eleventh century, the love of art, of music and song, also found its way and started the troubadour movement. Andalusia had enjoyed a very high culture and a splendid civilization since the middle of the ninth century, and any man who hesitates to admit that this stimulated France in its semi-barbarism, while there was an open door in Catalonia, can excuse himself only on the ground that he considers Europe too deeply and ignorantly prejudiced to be influenced. In any case, the Jews took Arab products, even scientific instruments, all over Europe. Professor Haskins shows that the Prior of Malvern Abbey, in the centre of England, had an astronomical instrument from Arab Spain in the eleventh century and had learned a little astronomy from a travelling Jew. A century before Roger Bacon learned

[1] Professor Haskins, though a recognized expert on the relations of Arab culture to Europe (*Studies in the History of Medieval Science*), is so far prejudiced by the pro-medieval school in America that, without serious examination, he rejects this statement and even says that it is generally rejected. On the contrary, it is so widely accepted that the *Catholic Encyclopædia* admits it. The chief biographer of Gerbert, the Duc de la Salle de Rochemaure, puts it beyond question. For the Arab civilization and its influence on Europe, see my *Splendour of Moorish Spain* (1935).

Arab science in the little school of Bishop Grosseteste, a number of Englishmen, as well as Germans and Italians, had gone to Spain to study science.

The Arabs of Sicily had the same culture as those of Spain and, in spite of the massive barrier of ignorance and prejudice which the Popes flung across Central Italy, they contributed to the awakening. The first science to be cultivated in Christendom, since it was so obviously useful and so desperately needed, was medical science; and the first two great schools of medicine were Salerno, under Jewish-Sicilian influence, in Southern Italy, and Montpellier, in the south of France, where there was a large colony of Spanish Jews.

But I am here concerned rather with the mental stimulation which, from the middle of the eleventh century, spread from the south over France and from there to England and Germany. The element of primary social importance in this was, not the enlargement of the episcopal schools for teaching theology, but the immense growth of free schools with lay teachers. There had, as I said, been a few important episcopal or monastic schools in each century, but the most learned men they produced—Hincmar, Lanfranc, Scotus Erigena, Berengar, etc.—had, as a rule, little beyond ecclesiastical learning, and are generally known to us as heretics. In the second half of the eleventh century there was an enormous growth of free schools. Any teacher who had ability attracted hundreds, sometimes thousands, of pupils; though most of the abler men took at least minor orders, since otherwise they had no chance of a chair in the chief schools, which the Church controlled.

There was very little classical literature known, still less science, and no great work in the new vernacular languages. Of the seven "liberal arts"—grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric in the lower schools, and music, geometry, arithmetic, and astronomy (or muddled elements of it) in the chief schools—it was chiefly dia-

lectics which captivated the youths. The Latin Quarter which now grew up at Paris, across the river from the episcopal school, was a city of taverns, brothels, and private schools, a wild scene of revelry and disorder, but this turbulent international gathering of youths took a fierce interest in dialectics, as that art was exhibited in the impassioned quarrels in the schools of rival masters or in the bold application of reasoning by such masters as Abélard to every accepted proposition.

Europe was awake once more. There were even schools for girls and women. The famous Héloïse reveals in her letters to Abélard a brilliant and informed mind and a cold challenge of the Church's ethic, even as abbess writing to abbot, which shows an extraordinary rapidity of advance. The Popes were throughout the twelfth century too narrowly educated themselves and too absorbed in their secular ambitions to perceive how the first result of this freedom of discussion and inquiry was a ringing challenge of their authority. How they reacted in the thirteenth century by ordering the massacre of the largest body of rebels, creating the Inquisition and converting the new intellectual vitality into a sterile Scholastic movement, we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE POPES REACT WITH MASSACRE AND INQUISITION

We arrive at the thirteenth century, which even so informed a Catholic writer as Mr. Belloc considers the greatest in history, and at the age of Pope Innocent III, whom most Catholics exalt above all others and regard as one of the chief constructive forces in the development of European civilization. Here, if ever, we must proceed with severe discrimination. It is possible to paint a picture of the thirteenth century in the style of one of Doré's illustrations of the *Inferno* or in the mood of one of Watteau's pleasant and graceful scenes; and both will be true.

The darker features of thirteenth-century life are not in dispute amongst authoritative historians. Those terrible generalizations about the character of the nobles, knights, and ladies which I quoted in the second chapter refer particularly to the thirteenth century. Torture, mutilation, and licence in war were as barbarous as in the tenth century, or more barbarous. Law and the administration of justice remained below the civilized level. Prostitution was never more flagrant or more naïve in any age of history; the monasteries and nunneries were as corrupt as ever; and the life of the new *bourgeois* was amazingly free and coarse. The vast new wealth and the emancipation of the serfs had left four-fifths of the population, the peasants, at the animal level; for, as Thorold Rogers has shown, they worked from sunrise to sunset on more than three hundred days a year for a poor and monotonous diet in filthy hovels. The intellectual

life was sterilized, and the advance of civilization was retarded for several centuries by the extinction of the spirit of scientific inquiry which the Arabs had inspired. And in addition to these old evils and the appalling ravages of disease, the Popes had ordered the massacre of almost the entire population of one of the most progressive provinces of Europe, had given a vastly greater range to the practice of torturing and slaying men for honest opinions, and had set up the most scandalous of quasi-legal tribunals, the Inquisition.

But if you think these things trivial, or your readers know nothing about them, you can use the light and tender colouring of a Raphael. See the noble cathedrals rising all over Europe and the thousands of students surging to the universities. Admire the barefooted friars who follow the lead of Francis and Dominic, the velvets and gold and picturesque timbered houses of the burghers, the processions of the guilds of workers with silk banners waving in the breeze, the crusaders piously sweeping the infidel out of Spain, the great Pope Innocent watching and directing the beautiful new theocracy. Massacre of the Albigensians? Oh, those were dangerous heretics whose tenets—even Mr. Belloc stoops to repeat this—were injurious to the fabric of civilization. Burning of rebels against the Church? That was demanded by princes and peoples in the white-hot fervour of their faith. Wholesale murder and robbery of Jews? The Popes did their best to protect them. Let your mind dwell rather on the profound thinkers, like Thomas Aquinas, who laid down for all time the sane principles of social life—even, American Catholics outrageously say, of our modern democracy and freedom—and the men who, like Roger Bacon and Albert, laid the foundations of modern science.

Few readers will ask me to examine at any length these Catholic estimates or descriptions of the thirteenth century. We have seen enough of the sophistry and untruthfulness of the Catholic historians upon which they

are based. It is significant that while Positivist writers have, under the influence of Comte, made very mischievous concessions to the Catholic Church, the only Positivist historian who has made a serious study of the thirteenth century scorns the idea that it was a Golden Age and pronounces it "an age of violence, fraud, and impurity such as can hardly be conceived now."[1] As to the new American historians who profess to find that we had libelled the Middle Ages—one notices that they never mention our standard work, the *Cambridge Medieval History*, which makes a mockery in advance of their apologies—not only have they not discovered a single feature of medieval life which we had overlooked, but their work at once arouses the suspicion of any thoughtful reader, even if he does not know the extent of the influence of the Roman Church in America.

It will, for instance, at once occur to such a reader that they do not explain why a Church which had obtained such despotic power over Europe by the middle of the fifth century that it could put its critics to death permitted it to sink into barbarism and remain barbaric for six or seven centuries. It will further occur to him, if he has any acquaintance with the literature of the subject, that they do not explain why, if European civilization rose to such a height in the thirteenth century, it sank again in the fourteenth and fifteenth, and the world had to wait six further centuries for a civilization that got back to the level of the Roman Empire in the days of Hadrian. They do not seem even to know that Mr. Belloc and the Catholic historians whom they fancy they are supporting make the glorious period and the Age of

[1] J. Cotter Morison's *Service of Man*, 1903 edition, p. 64. Mr. Morison gives, with the original authorities, an account of vice (especially clerical and monastic) in the Middle Ages which dispenses me from dealing at length with that point. But read also H. C. Lea's *Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy* (1884), a solidly documented work which the Catholic critic prefers to ignore. The general picture of vice, violence, treachery, and callousness is fully supported by the writers of the *Cambridge Medieval History*.

Chivalry end in complete demoralization in the first decade of the fourteenth century. They do not pay the least attention to the verdict on the general character of the upper class (clergy, nobles, and ladies) of those leading authorities on each country in the Middle Ages whom I quoted in the second chapter. They make the thirteenth a " glorious century " by such means as this:—

> No other country can produce a list of men to match Innocent III, Frederic II, St. Francis, Ezzelino da Romano, Thomas Aquinas, Niccoló Pisano, Giotto, and Dante.[1]

He later observes that the name of Ezzelino has become a synonym for cruelty: Frederic was not an Italian (his father was a German and his mother a Norman), and his culture was Arab; and, as to the three monks and three artists who remain in this list which " no other country could produce," Germany in as short a period produced Handel, Bach, Beethoven, Frederic the Great, Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, and Kant, though it was then considered a backward country.

Let us get back to real history. The darker, even half-savage, features of life in the thirteenth century which I summarized are not disputed, as *general* features of life, by any historical expert on any country during that century. Of the brighter features the one indisputable virtue, which catches every eye and so irradiates the century that many look no farther into it, was the superb art: of which, however, there was none at Rome, since the Popes were indifferent or hostile to it. But we have already discussed medieval art. The school-life of the *twelfth* century we admire and esteem, but, however much it expanded, it ceased in the *thirteenth* century to be of social value. The free schools and independent masters were suppressed, and dogma was substituted for inquiry. The crowded universities—Rashall showed

[1] H. D. Sedgwick, *Italy in the Thirteenth Century* (2 vols., 1913), I, 253. Other recent books repeat this.

forty years ago in his *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* that the numbers are greatly exaggerated—were for the most part full of monklings and priestlings listening meekly to theological subtleties which nobody reads to-day; while those who, like Roger Bacon, tried to introduce Arab science were driven into silence. To this point we will return later.

The guilds were, as I said, not inspired by the Church but brought under its influence when it failed to suppress them, and within two centuries they would be abandoned by the workers themselves on the ground that they were inimical to their interests. As to the Orders of mendicant friars, our age may or may not admire the self-starvation of Francis of Assisi and the zeal of Dominic to destroy freedom of discussion, but the writer who represents that they filled the thirteenth century with swarms of holy and austere men deludes his reader. It has to be admitted even in the ablest history of the Franciscan Order by a Franciscan monk,[1] that the body was corrupt within five years of the death of Francis and got steadily worse. Who has not read the moving account of the arrival of the demure, barefooted friars in England? Father Holzappel admits that before the end of the thirteenth century these English Franciscans tried to bribe the Pope with £20,000 (or five times as much in modern money) to permit them to hold property. He—we shall see that this last Pope of the beautiful century was an adept in every vice—took the money and decided against them. After that date their virtue was the joke of Europe, as it is a joke in Catholic Germany to-day. The Dominican order also speedily became corrupt.

The impartial student will conclude that, while the economic development and the great increase of wealth made possible the advance of art and the expansion of the school-system, there were in fact more virtuous people in

[1] Father H. Holzappel's *Handbuch der Geschichte des Franziskanenordens* (1909).

the thirteenth century—the more conscientious of the friars and their lay followers—than in the twelfth, but that the great body of clergy and laity showed no moral improvement. And this will be apparent if we consider the career and work of Pope Innocent. He was a Roman of noble birth, and had been educated at the universities of Paris and Bologna. His culture, in other words, consisted of theology and Church law, and he had no respect for any other culture; as he shows in his book *On Contempt of the World.* He almost transcended Gregory VII in his idea of the Pope's office. In one letter he placidly observes that earthly empire compares with that of the Papacy as the feeble moon compares with the sun. So when he became Pope, in 1198, Rome and Europe knew what to expect. He sent out five hundred letters in the first year of his pontificate, more than five thousand in his eighteen years of rule, and there is, therefore, no room for controversy about his views and actions. No one has ever questioned that he was a profoundly religious man of austere life and considerable ability.

He began by demanding an oath of allegiance to himself, as Pope, from the Prefect, who was supposed to represent the Emperor, and the Senator, who represented the Roman people; and he next discharged a large number of corrupt lay officials in the Papal service and carried out a considerable reform of ecclesiastical and civic life in Rome. In order to check the nobles he gave great power and wealth to his brother, but this nepotism and his despotic conduct aroused increasing anger, and in 1203 the Romans flew to arms once more and drove out Innocent and his brother. For a year the city was disturbed by the most murderous faction-fights, every tower-castle again becoming a fort, and Innocent fostered the feuds from the provinces. He at length got back to Rome and heavily fortified the old Vatican Palace.

He had won Rome and had virtually suppressed its democracy, though this would revive in later years; and

he had in the meantime started upon the work of winning Italy. The Donation of Constantine was not enough for him; and, as we saw, many provinces of Italy which were not included in that fraudulent document had in one way or other become fiefs of the Papacy. All Italy must be induced to follow the same path. We need not consider in detail how he encouraged or bribed cities and provinces to rebel against the nobles who governed them in the name of the German Emperor. It will be enough to examine how he made Sicily and Southern Italy—the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies—a fief of the Papacy. He proceeded with all the ruthlessness which is characteristic of " great " Popes. To the appalling bloodshed which he caused he and his successors were indifferent, and he repeatedly ignored the principles of justice and honour. The end justified the means. Almost more clearly than any other of the great Popes he lets us see the reason of their futility; for he unquestionably made no permanent improvement of any sort in the life of Europe.

The Emperor Henry VI had subdued Sicily with horrible brutality, but he had died in 1197, leaving his widow Constance, a Norman princess, with a boy of four years. This boy, Frederic, came to be known to his contemporaries, hostile or friendly, as " The Wonder of the World." In the next chapter I will tell of the circumstances which thwarted the genius of Frederic, but the action of Innocent, which he would learn when he came to maturity, helped to make him cynical. Constance, a feeble and lachrymose woman, turned to the Pope for support. He gave a promise of it on the usurious terms that she was to sacrifice the independence of the kingdom by acknowledging it a fief of the Papacy. She died soon afterwards, making the Pope guardian of her son, with the handsome remuneration of thirty thousand gold pieces a year. German troops were trying to get South Italy, and Innocent financed a French adventurer, Walter de Brienne, who had married a Sicilian princess and claimed

to inherit through her, to take the field against the Germans. Some chronicles say that the Pope had arranged this man's marriage. However that may be, all historians recognize that the kingdom of Frederic was greatly endangered by this policy of the Pope, but it was saved by the death of both the French and German commanders.

The struggle had brought grave disorder upon Sicily, and the policy of the Pope aggravated it. As part of his bargain with Constance he had exacted privileges for the higher clergy which no adult male monarch would have granted, and these prelates, yielding to the contagious luxury and gaiety of Sicilian life—it still had a more prosperous civilization than it has to-day—wrung enormous sums from the people to maintain their voluptuous courts. When the Pope went on to compel Frederic, at the age of fourteen, to marry an unattractive Spanish princess of twenty-four, the boy began to reflect upon his situation. Three years later, however, he was summoned to Germany to occupy his father's throne in that country, and after an amazing journey through rebellious North Italy, and making further concessions to the Pope for his permission to wear the Crown of both Sicily and Germany, he reached Frankfort and, to the great joy of the German people, was crowned. Here the Pope's behaviour had been even more scandalous than in Sicily.

The one plausible ground for claiming that these great Popes contributed to civilization is that they are understood to have insisted sternly upon sexual virtue and justice. I will not here quote the very many letters in which Innocent rebuked royal vice, or inquire how far he was moved by a consciousness of power, because whatever effect he produced was ephemeral. It is one of the most notorious of historical facts that the morals of princes, especially in Italy, became steadily worse in the course of the Middle Ages, until the Papal Court itself joined in the general licence. Nor will any man of modern sentiment

fail to see that a Pope who forbids mistresses and is silent about acts of sheer savagery is not a promoter of real civilization. The Germans had, in subduing Sicily, perpetrated revolting outrages. Nuns were stripped, smeared with honey, decorated with feathers, and taken on horseback, face to tail, through jeering lines of soldiers. Princes and nobles were castrated or had their eyes burned out. Others were compelled to sit, nude, on chairs of heated iron. These horrors had been transferred to Germany itself, and Innocent was in large part responsible. He never shrank from injustice when the interests of the Church seemed to demand it.

At the death of Henry VI his brother Philip had, on the pretext that Frederic was too young, seized the crown. Otto of Brunswick then made a fantastic claim to it, and years of very brutal civil war ensued. Otto begged the Pope's support, with the usual promise that he would be a loyal subject of the Papacy. For some time the war went against Otto, and the Pope was silent. The rights of Frederic, the real heir to the throne and his ward, he ignored. His letters at first merely complained that, since he was the Lord of the World, he ought to be asked to decide; at which even the loyal clergy in Germany jeered. At length, in 1201, he sent a Legate to Germany with a Bull [1] in which he denounced Philip and released all Germans from their oath (taken before the death of Henry VI) of fidelity to Frederic, on the amazing ground that an oath of loyalty to an unbaptized infant was not binding. He awarded the crown to Otto, whose claim is regarded by all historians as fraudulent. He then ordered the prelates of Germany to recognize Otto. Hardly any of them obeyed him, and the savage war continued for seven years, when Otto was defeated. Philip, however, was murdered, and, with the Pope's approval, Otto took the crown; and he at once disavowed

[1] It may be read in Migne's *Register of Imperial Concerns*, No. XXIV, Vol. CCXVI.

his promises to the Pope, told him bluntly to mind his own spiritual business, and set out to recover Italy. It was at this juncture that the German clergy and people summoned Frederic from Sicily, and we are not much edified to learn that the Pope now agreed.

The same mood of compromise with justice when the interests of the Church are at stake is detected throughout Innocent's career. He got more money from England than from any other country, and overlooked the scandalous morals of the clergy. He was blind to the perfidy and vices of King John, made no indiscreet inquiry into the murder of Prince Arthur, and for John's shameful seduction of the *fiancée* of the Count de la Marche he imposed only the ridiculously light penance of equipping a hundred knights for the Crusade. When Philip of France captured Normandy he told the Norman clergy when they consulted him that he did not understand the matter, and they must judge for themselves (*Ep.* VIII, 7). It is true that he declared John deposed and laid an interdict upon his kingdom in the quarrel about Langton, but that was a virtual invitation to Philip of France, who was only too eager, to invade England. When John submitted and promised to pay vassalage, Innocent ruined all the repute he had won in England. He excommunicated the barons for their " nefarious presumption " in rebelling against his vassal, King John, and he described the Magna Charta, the mildness of which now amuses historians, as a document " inspired by the devil." When the barons offered the crown to Louis, son of Philip of France, he excommunicated both father and son. The quarrel continued on these pitiful lines until the last year of the Pope's life.

There was not a country in Europe in which his " stern sense of justice " did not show a similar wavering according to political circumstances and the varying interests of the Papacy. Nor was it necessary for Christendom to await his death to see how superficial his influence was.

With great difficulty he organized the Fourth Crusade, although very little of Palestine now remained in the hands of Christians. It is interesting to note that in order to raise the very large sum of money with which he tempted a reluctant Europe to answer his call, he sanctioned a practice which became one of the most flagrant abuses of the medieval Church. The penance imposed upon sinners after confession was to take the form of a money contribution. The *bulas* of indulgence which were still sold in Spain in this century—I have a full set, bought over the counter in Madrid, dated 1911—were officially titled " Bulas of the Crusade," thus directly connecting with the greatest of their Popes a traffic which scandalized English Catholics when I exposed it.

But the behaviour of the Crusaders, whom Baldwin of Flanders at length led across Europe, shows how shallow was the Pope's influence on his own age. Catholic and popular accounts of the Crusades are now recognized to be on the historical level of a recent film which was based upon them. But even the historians who profess to recognize a considerable influence of the Crusades in the improvement of Europe greatly exaggerate. From the East through Venice and from Spain and Sicily stimulating artistic objects had reached Europe and opened the eyes of men to a greater civilization all through the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In fact, the suggestion that large bodies of knights and men returned to Europe to tell of the wonders they had seen runs counter to the most notorious facts. Comparatively few of the millions lived to return, and many of their ablest leaders, whose motive had been loot and lust of fighting, gladly remained in Syria and adopted its vicious luxury. The conduct of Innocent's Crusaders was typical enough.

When, twenty-three thousand strong, they reached Venice, the Venetians bribed them, with an offer of free transport, to take for Venice the Hungarian and Christian city of Zara in Dalmatia. Innocent, whose threats when

he heard of the offer they ignored, excommunicated all of them, then lifted the ban from all but the Venetians, who never heeded such immaterial penalties. The Crusaders, being invited to intervene in a dispute of the Greek imperial family, next stormed Constantinople and sacked it with the utmost brutality. Not only were the jewels and gold and silver of the churches as well as the palaces stolen, but even the cathedral of St. Sophia was coarsely desecrated, the soldiers of the Cross carousing before its altars with the prostitutes of the city. The nunneries suffered the usual fate, and nearly half the city was burned down. In his letters to them Innocent expressed a mild resentment of these outrages, though the Greeks, he added, had merited them by heresy and schism. The full current of his indignation is because they and the Venetians had taken over Constantinople and *not* exacted a recognition of his supremacy from the Greek clergy! It is a pity that we have not the reflections of Saladin, the one real noble of the age, on the Crusaders. Innocent vainly implored them for several years to lay aside their greed and proceed to the East.

If we accepted the conventional belief that the Crusaders were men who in a mood of deep religious sentiment had set out to redeem the shrines of Jerusalem, this complete failure of the most powerful Pope to curb their ruffianly impulses would give us a measure of his influence on the general population. No modern historian does accept that belief, but this repulsive page of the history of the time nevertheless puts in a singular light the claim that he was a great force for civilization. And the irony deepens when we study that other great enterprise of his later years, the Crusade against the Albigensians.

No reliable and adequate history of what is called the Massacre of the Albigensians has ever been written, and it is very difficult to estimate from contemporary writers the full extent of that awful massacre and the loss to civilization. What we do know is that an army of two

hundred thousand of the truculent soldiers of France and England, with twenty thousand mail-clad knights, did not succeed in destroying the heretics after two years of savage fighting, and a new army of a hundred thousand had to be sent against them. We read of the Crusaders killing forty thousand men, women, and children in a single town which they took. It is therefore certain that Innocent caused and directed the massacre of several hundred thousand men, women, and children for heresy in a few years. A contemporary Catholic poet says five hundred thousand.

And the way in which Catholic writers now make light of this appalling Papal outrage is nauseous. Our generally admirable *Dictionary of Ethics and Religion*, following the modern practice of trusting Catholic writers, allowed Canon Vacandard to write its article on the Albigensians, and we read in it such passages as this:—

> From the twelfth century onward the repression of heresy was the great business of Church and State. The distress caused, particularly in the north of Italy and the south of France, by the Cathari or Manichæans, whose doctrine wrought destruction to society as well as to faith, appalled the leaders of Christianity. On several occasions, in various places, people and rulers at first sought justice in summary conviction and execution; culprits were either outlawed or put to death. The Church for a long time opposed these rigorous measures. . . . The death-penalty was never included in any system of repressions.

I have never seen in any standard work of reference, and rarely even in a Catholic work by a priest of any importance, such a clotted mass of untruth. Since this French canon is supposed to be an expert on these matters, he is surely aware that, as we saw in an earlier chapter, Pope Leo I inaugurated this murderous policy of the Papacy in the fifth century, declaring that "ecclesiastical mildness shrinks from blood-punishment, but it is aided by the severe decrees of Christian princes." Indeed, before that

time, we saw, the Popes (and other bishops) had induced the Emperor Theodosius and his successors to decree the penalty of death against pagans and heretics. Innocent III, we shall see, expressly took his stand on the words of Leo when he ordered the secular powers to proceed against heretics.

We shall further see, in the next chapter, that the subterfuge of throwing the guilt upon the State or " the princes and peoples " is as false as it is mean and ignoble. The people never called for such a policy: the princes not until the Church commanded them to do so, generally under severe penalties. That the Church for a long time opposed the policy is a sheer fabrication. It was at the very first known case of the burning of a heretic, the Spaniard Priscillian, that Pope Leo, in 447, when a few humane bishops dissented, laid down the principle I have quoted.

But the meanest and boldest untruth in the passage I quoted from Canon Vacandard—and it is repeated by most of our modern Catholic writers—is that the tenets of the Albigensians " wrought destruction to society." Vacandard himself, when he comes to describe their principles of conduct, prudently refrains from repeating that they were dangerous to society. Readers who are unfamiliar with these matters will, indeed, be amazed to learn that their code was exactly that code of life which the Church itself declared to be the ideal fulfilment of the moral teaching of the Gospels; the code which some hundreds of thousands of priests, monks, and nuns professed at the time to observe: the code, in fine, which Pope Innocent himself took pride in observing! It was just the austere monastic code of complete chastity, voluntary poverty, disdain of all wordly things, and severe fasting. If to these we add strict vegetarianism and pacifism—they denounced the legal death-sentence as well as war—we see the full enormity of the common Catholic trick of justifying the great massacre on social grounds. There is a

case in the literature of the time of a Roman who was brought before the Inquisition and charged with the same heresy (Catharism or Manichæanism) and protesting that he certainly did not share that heresy because he lied and cursed and had a wife and family.

The strict observance of this code was restricted to a small minority of the sect who were known as the Elect: just as in a normal and decent Catholic community the code is confined to monks and nuns. Cathari is the Greek for "clean," and is not inaptly rendered "Puritans." The root of the system was a modification of the ancient Manichæan dogma, which was derived from the Persian religion, that matter, especially the flesh, had been created by an evil spirit, and the thorough believer would avoid sexual intercourse, mortify the body which threatened to taint his spirit, and hold all material things in disdain. We will consider this curious but most extensive growth of heresy in medieval Europe in the next chapter. Here it is enough to say that the genuine Manichæan communities, which formed a rival Church with bishops and (according some) a Pope, were centres of crystallization for the rapidly spreading discontent with or rebellion against the Papacy and the clergy. The sordid hypocrisy of the Church system disgusted alike the men and women of decent life and the frivolous.

This was particularly true in the towns of Southern France, with the city of Albi as the centre of the revolt. Here the vast majority of the rebels against Rome were just ordinary folk who saw that in practice the Papal system was false. Instead of being a menace to society, they made the southern provinces of France, which had, as I said, been the first to learn enlightenment from the Spanish Arabs, the most prosperous and the happiest in Europe. Contemporary writers assure us that the Cathari were particularly skilful workers. In an unguarded moment Canon Vacandard says that they "threatened the Roman pontificate itself with overthrow." That was their real

and only menace. That there were hypocrites among them no one will be eager to contest. The Puritan body of New England and the Calvinists of Scotland have a heavy record of scandals. Every ascetic body has. But the specific charge of vice rests upon such wild attacks as that of the twelfth-century German abbess Hildegard, who, a *nun*, shrieked about their " contempt of the divine command to increase and multiply," and stupidly added that they were " lean with fasting but full of lust." Nuns are usually told that fasting extinguishes lust.

Fifty years of preaching had made not the least impression upon this immense body of heretics. Even Bernard of Clairvaux could not move them, for their indictment of the Church was unanswerable. Frivolous princes, the Duke of Aquitaine and the Count of Toulouse, protected them, for they were good taxpayers and good anti-clericals. So Innocent decided to pick a quarrel with Raymond of Toulouse, and as early as 1207 he ordered the French King, the Duke of Burgundy, and other princes to prepare for a crusade against Raymond and his heretics.

Raymond knew that Philip of France coveted his province, and he began to negotiate. In the midst of the negotiations the Pope's Legate was murdered, and, though there is not the least reason to make Raymond responsible, the Pope, without inquiry, declared him guilty and ordered the attack. He addressed (*Ep.* XI, 28) Philip, a man of notorious licence whom he had a few years earlier heavily denounced, as " exalted among all others by God "; but Philip was restrained in his cupidity by fear of the English. However, a vast army of twenty thousand knights and two hundred thousand foot assembled for the " crusade." Readers may remember the description of the French knights and nobles which I quoted from Professor Luchaire in the second chapter. It is the knights and nobles of the time of Philip, the Pope's crusaders, whom he is describing. Do Catholics imagine that the Pope did not know their character?

Innocent's action at this stage shows us how little he cared. Raymond humbled himself before the Pope and his arrogant Legates. He surrendered seven castles as hostages and accepted the order to lead his own troops against his people. The Pope was embarrassed. Catholic writers say that he was now powerless to stay the avalanche, but they never refer to the letter (XI, 232, in the Migne collection) in which he quotes to his Legates the words of Paul (II Corinthians, xii, 16), "Being crafty, I caught you with guile," and explains that they must pretend to accept Raymond's submission and, "deceiving him by prudent dissimulation, pass to the extirpation of the other heretics." A great Pope: the greatest of them all. The ferocious Cistercian monk Arnold, the Pope's chief Legate, took his words so literally that the Pope was for a time shocked by the injustice, and promised Raymond a fair trial. He never got it. Impossible conditions were laid upon him, and he was excommunicated and his province thrown open to the robbers, on condition that the Papacy got its tithe. Its new ruler was to squeeze a large annual sum for the Papacy out of the stricken province.

Two years of butchery, torture, pillage, and rape by two hundred and twenty thousand expert soldiers did not extinguish the heresy: yet Catholic writers protest that we exaggerate when we say that the heretics, who had few knights and no trained armies—they relied chiefly upon fortified towns—must have numbered something like the poet's half-million. The Spanish King, Pedro of Aragon, wrote some plain Latin to the Pope about the butchery, and he hesitated. He wrote his legates, who revelled in the bloodshed, and Simon de Montfort, the military leader, who revelled in the loot, to say that they had done enough. Indeed, the crusaders, loaded with loot, cared little whether or no the heresy was extinct and were returning home. The Pope now recalled in his letters that Raymond had never had a trial, but he presently yielded

to the demands of the monk and de Montfort, and a new Crusade of a hundred thousand men was required to annihilate the heretics.

To the end Innocent was haunted by the spectre of the horrors he had caused. He saw the leaders of the Crusade, the monk and de Montfort, fall into a violent quarrel about the spoils, just at the time when Frederic was creating a mighty power in Germany and the Crusaders were mocking him in Constantinople. At the Lateran Council he weakly pleaded for justice to the untried Raymond and his heirs, and then he allowed the truculent monks to dismiss the prince with a pension of four hundred marks a year. He did not live to see Raymond recover a large part of his dominions and a new spread of heresy. He died in 1216. Europe sighed with relief, and resumed its vicious ways exactly as if Pope Innocent had never existed. His one permanent monument was the Inquisition, which, we shall see, was based upon his words and conduct.

CHAPTER VI

FREDERIC II AND THE PAPACY

THE story of the next four Popes is almost entirely the record of a struggle with Frederic II: a struggle which at some stages was so unjust, so patently inspired by sheer hatred, that it disgusted Christendom and disgusts every non-Catholic historian. Some day, when the writing of history has become wholly free and impartial, the world may learn exactly what the cost was, in terms of soldiers slain, homes ruined, and demoralization of the Popes themselves, of the hundred-year conflict of the Papacy with the Holy Roman Empire which it had created. That conflict was inevitable from the time of Hildebrand. It is often ascribed to the greed of the Hohenstaufen dynasty of Emperors (1138–1254), for the complete extinction of which the Popes of this period fought. But it was inevitable on the Papal side. Gregory VII, in restoring the strength of the Papacy, restored also and enlarged the claim of a temporal dominion. This claim grew until the Pope aspired to be the feudal monarch of the whole of Italy, if not all Europe; and the northern part of Italy was subject to the Emperor. Pope Innocent made the clash of ambitions more bitter than ever when he induced a weak and nervous woman, the Norman wife of a German Emperor, to make Sicily and South Italy a fief of the Papacy, and thus defraud her son, Frederic, of his heritage.

If great Popes had one-half the serene vision and statesmanship with which so many writers endow them, Innocent must have foreseen that when the child grew to manhood he would, if he were only at the average level of his age, fight for his rights. Naturally he could not

foresee that the son of the anæmic Constantia would become the greatest monarch in a thousand years of European history. So sober and distinguished an historian as Professor Freeman says of Frederic:—

> The most gifted of the sons of men: by nature the more than peer of Alexander, of Constantine, and of Charlemagne: in mere genius, in mere accomplishment, the greatest prince who ever wore a crown. . . . Frederic belongs to no age: intellectually he is above his age and above every age; morally it can hardly be denied that he was below his age: but in nothing was he of his age.[1]

Frederic's modern biographer, Allshorn, finds this praise excessive, yet says that "in genius Frederic has had no superior among the princes of the world." It is more important to correct the second sentence I quoted from Freeman. To say that Frederic was morally below his age is, after what we have seen about that age, absurd. Freeman was prejudiced by his religious antipathy to Frederic's harems and Arab mistresses. He does not seem to have reflected how singular it is, on his view of life, that so immoral a monarch accomplished more, as he says, than any other. The fact is that in regard to the vices that matter—cruelty, treachery, and injustice—he was far above his age, even above the two Popes who wrecked his splendid work; though in such a struggle he inevitably slipped at times into the common practices. Educated in the science and the genial philosophy of Arab-Sicily, he would have lifted his Empire up to its level of civilization; and, although the Popes seemed to ruin him and his work, the more rapid advance in culture of North Italy than the rest of Europe was in large part due to him. Pope Innocent's one lasting monument was the Inquisition; Frederic's, the intellectual advance of the Italian cities—always excepting Rome—which led the recovery of Europe.

On the other hand, let us say, in some mitigation of

[1] *Historical Essays*, "Frederic II."

the truculence of the Popes, that Frederic did not believe the Christianity which he formally professed. His Norman-Sicilian ancestors had a tradition of scepticism. It was widely believed at the time that he wrote a work entitled *The Three Impostors* (Moses, Christ, and Mohammed) which was much read; and Frederic's palace in Sicily was just the place in which one would write such a book. He did not believe in immortality, and his general philosophy was probably that of the liberal Arab and Persian thinkers: a not very profound or serious Pantheism based upon Aristotle. This does not excuse the conduct of the Popes, but it helped to make the conflict inevitable and the constructive work of Frederic more difficult.

The Pope, Honorius III (1216–1227), who succeeded Innocent, is described as a quiet old man who wanted no quarrel with anybody. It is clear that Innocent had left the world in such a turmoil that the cardinals felt it advisable to elect a moderate man. Rome gave him little trouble. It was still nominally a Republic (or Commune), but all power was in the hands of the Senator (Mayor or Governor) who was elected by the Popes.

Gentle Honorius may have been, within limits, but he was not simple. When Frederic, after a few years spent in the improvement of his German kingdom, wanted to be crowned Emperor at Rome and to leave his son in Germany, the Pope angrily complained that he had been deceived. The crowns of Germany and Sicily (with Rome like a nut between the crackers) were not to be united in one man. It does seem that Frederic lied—a small matter in that age—to get the Pope's consent, but Honorius struck a hard bargain. The Papacy must be confirmed in all its temporal possessions, and all who henceforward seize ecclesiastical property or legislate against the clergy must be deemed heretics. Frederic must make it a law of the Empire that heretics shall be outlawed, and all magistrates shall be compelled to search

them out and punish them. This is the first step in the legal establishment of the Inquisition, which means "searching-out"; and the Catholic writers who tell how Frederic himself established it in this primitive form are careful not to explain the circumstances. Frederic was crowned in St. Peter's in 1220, and he went south to put in order his long-neglected kingdom of Sicily. This was so arduous that he declined to go on the Crusade, as he had promised, until his work was accomplished. This, and renewed friction with the Romans, who once more expelled their Pope, broke the peace, but Honorius died in 1227, and left the problem to his successor.

Gregory IX, though seventy-seven years old at the time of his election, had observed with anger what he called the weakness of Honorius. He was of the same noble family as Innocent III, and less inclined to compromise. Three days after his coronation he ordered Frederic to sail for Palestine. The Emperor set sail from Brindisi; and shortly afterwards the Pope, a man of fiery temper, heard that he was back in Italy, pleading illness. Without troubling to make careful inquiry, though there was an epidemic of fever at Brindisi, Gregory solemnly excommunicated Frederic and denounced him to the whole of Christendom. The truth is that for some years the Pope had been outraged by stories about Frederic's Saracen harems, his favour to infidels, and his disdainful violation of the unjust privileges which Innocent had extorted from his mother for the higher clergy. All this, suitably embroidered, was put into the Pope's message to the world, and Frederic retorted with a counter-manifesto on the arrogance and greed of the Popes. This was read to a cheering crowd on the Capitol at Rome, and, when the Pope again excommunicated the Emperor in St. Peter's, the worshippers became so threatening that Gregory fled from the church. The city turned out in arms, and once more a Pope retreated to the provinces.

Plainly there was up to this point much to be said on

both sides; it was with the next step that the disreputable campaign of the Popes began. Not only were the people of Europe weary of calls to Crusades and demands of money—in England the Pope's Bulls were trodden underfoot—but Frederic believed that he could get free access for Christians to the shrines of Jerusalem without adding further to the hundreds of thousands of lives which had been sacrificed. He was friendly with the Sultan of Egypt, who then controlled Palestine, and he went to see him and, offering to help him against a rival Sultan, got from him the city of Jerusalem, on condition that the Moslem should be free to visit their own shrines there. This humane victory the Pope denounced as " a deal with the devil," and he again excommunicated Frederic. He even violated one of the most sacred conditions which the Popes themselves had laid down for the Crusades. Any prince who invaded the domains of another who had gone on Crusade was to be excommunicated. Gregory summoned Europe to a Crusade against Frederic's Kingdom while he was in Jerusalem, and actually sent a small army to take it. The whole world now saw that what the Pope really wanted was territory, and the outcry was so great that Gregory had to retract and lift the ban.

In the spring of the year 1230 devastating floods, with pestilence in their wake, roused the superstition of the Romans, and they implored the Pope to return. It is probable that he made it a condition that there should be drastic action against heretics, who were now very numerous in all the cities of Italy. Milan swarmed with them, and at Rome even many of the clergy were tainted. So the second step was taken in the establishment of the Inquisition. A tribunal was set up in front of the door of Sta. Maria Maggiore, and the cardinals, the judges, and the Senator sat there, the crowd of citizens looking on.

Because the records of the Roman Inquisition are still kept secret—the Catholic historian Pastor (XII, 507) found that when Leo XIII boldly opened to scholars the

doors of the Secret Archives, these and other documents had been removed—Catholic writers often say that no heretics were put to death at Rome. The Chronicle of Richard of San Germano tells us that even in this first hour of the Roman Inquisition a number of heretics were burned alive,[1] and the official life of Gregory IX boasts that he "condemned many priests and clerics, and lay people of both sexes." From this date every Senator on taking office at Rome had to swear that he would execute all who were denounced to him by the Inquisition as heretics. Gregorovius quotes a document of the year 1266 which shows that a Franciscan friar, who was then the Inquisitor—in full, "the Searcher for Heretical Perversity"—condemned a noble for sheltering heretics. His relatives to the third degree were outlawed, and the bones of his father and his wife were dug up and burned.

From the start the Roman Inquisition was tainted with a vice which apologists never mention: half the condemned man's property went to the informers. The rule in all countries was that at least a third of his property went to the informer, and, since few who were denounced ever escaped condemnation, the result can be imagined. Informers and witnesses, who remained anonymous, never had to confront the accused or his legal representative—if he could induce any lawyer to face the risk of defending him—and in every way the process was a caricature of justice. The trial-scene in Mr. G. B. Shaw's *St. Joan* is as far removed from reality as most of the history in Mr. Shaw's plays. It is true that one Pope ordered that the name of the accuser should be given to the accused, so that he could say if there was personal enmity, but the Pope added that this must be done only when there was no danger to the accuser; and even Vacandard admits that the Inquisitors held that there always was such danger. In theory two such secret

[1] In Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, VII, 1026. This is a reliable contemporary witness.

accusers were required: in practice one was considered enough. The accused could bring no witnesses, and a plea that he regularly attended church counted for nothing. Some Popes warned lawyers that if they defended suspects they laid themselves open to a suspicion of heresy. In short, what generally happened was that any man with property could be denounced secretly by a man who wanted half or a third of it; and he either pleaded guilty and was fined, or pleaded not guilty, even after torture, and was burned. "The Inquisition," said a sixteenth-century Catholic writer, Segni, "was invented to rob the rich of their possessions." We have the complaint of the Papal Legate Eymeric that the princes are relaxing in their zeal to persecute because "there are no more rich heretics."

Such was the institution which the *Catholic Encyclopædia* describes as "a substantial advance in the contemporary administration of justice, and therefore in the general civilization of mankind." That the people demanded the punishment of heresy is a wanton untruth; and that secular monarchs and other authorities pleaded for it, in spite of the profit they made out of it, is equally false. The Spanish Inquisition was, it is true, independent of Rome, but the Popes strained every nerve to get control of it, and the struggle was simply a rivalry for gain and power. Professor A. S. Turberville's *Medieval Heresy and the Inquisition* (1920) shows in detail how it was forced upon reluctant nations and cities by the Popes. Lucius III had in 1183 urged the civic authorities to root out heretics. Innocent III, we saw, revived the murderous principle of Leo I. The "gentle" Honorius III had in 1220 compelled Frederic to make heresy a crime in civil law (for the whole of Italy and Germany). Gregory IX burned heretics and compelled the magistrates everywhere to search for them and the monarchs of all countries to adopt Frederic's legislation. With the decrees of Innocent IV in 1245 and 1252, compelling all monarchs to take

oath to prosecute heretics and all civil magistrates to set up a tribunal of friars to search for them, and sanctioning the use of torture to make the accused confess and denounce others, the Inquisition, the most distinctive fruit of the thirteenth century, was complete. As to the plea that the Inquisitors "recommended mercy" and the Church "shrank from the death-sentence," it is childish. I have shown elsewhere that in its Canon Law to-day the Church claims that it can and *must* put heretics to death.[1]

Even bolder is the Catholic plea that heretics were a few rebels in a Europe which was profoundly attached to the Papacy, and too many historians accept this estimate without reflection. The record of persecution, which we cannot give here, shows that Christendom entered upon a most widespread rebellion against the Papacy as soon as the Dark Age ended. The modified Manichæan philosophy and ethic which spread over Italy, France, and Western Germany—I have quoted the Abbess Hildegarde shrieking that it threatened to ruin the faith there—a Christian adaptation of the Persian dogma of two creative principles, was only the core of a much wider revolt. It seems, since its adherents in France were often called Bougres (which is the origin of an opprobrious epithet), to have come from Bulgaria, where refugees from persecution in the Greek world had settled. These were deeply religious, calling themselves Bogomil or "Friends of God," and we saw that from the Rhine to the Pyrenees the genuine Manichæans were described as sober and austere.

But this was only one body. In Switzerland and Italy there was an equally wide spread of the Waldensians, who were simply early Protestants or Evangelicals. In France there were similar bodies, and apart from all these and the Arnoldists were the immense numbers of men who had learned scepticism from the free school-life of the twelfth century, the ethical revolt of the Troubadour

[1] See my *Papacy in Politics To-day*, 1937, pp. 37–8.

literature, and the spectacle of clerical and monastic corruption. We saw that Canon Vacandard admitted that by the year 1200 the very existence of the Papacy was threatened. He is right in the sense that, if a free development of the mind of Europe had been permitted, the revolt against Rome would have occurred at least two centuries before Luther, and the modern scientific age would have begun several centuries ago. The power of the Papacy has rested upon violence, upon that " right of the sword " which it emphatically claims to-day in its esoteric code of law, from the beginning of the thirteenth century to our own time.

How false it is to say that the people of Rome demanded action against heretics is clearly shown by Gregory's experience after his retraction of the ban upon Frederic and the trial of heretics. They quarrelled with the Pope about temporal possessions and drove him from Rome. " The city of roaring beasts," his cardinals called the Rome which he was supposed to have purified. They begged him to remain away from it, but he secured a return by bribery, and he was soon expelled for the third time in seven years. In addition to the demand for complete self-government, the citizens now decided that the whole region round Rome should belong to the city, the immunities of the clergy should be abolished, and the Pope should decree that sentence of excommunication should never again be passed upon a Roman. Gregory, from the provinces, retorted with an anathema, and the Romans raised an army to take away the Papal States from the Pope. Christian Europe soon had the amazing experience of the Pope solemnly demanding a Crusade against the Romans. He obtained a small army and defeated the Romans, but they remained so sullen that he spent two further years in exile. These facts are well known to the Catholic historians who tell their readers that it was the people who compelled the reluctant Pope to persecute.

His crusaders had been in great part supplied by Frederic, who had no sympathy with democracy, yet shortly afterwards the Pope was found to be intriguing with the cities of North Italy which were in rebellion against the Emperor. When Frederic resented this, he was again excommunicated, and every country received once more the heavy mutual indictments of Pope and Emperor. Frederic advanced upon Rome, and, when Gregory summoned a general Council, his fleet cynically captured more than a hundred prelates who were going to it. At this juncture Gregory died, more than ninety years old, and Celestine IV, who was elected, lived only seventeen days. During the two years of confusion that followed no election could be held, for the cardinals were scattered, many in heavily fortified castles in the country, and the state of Rome was chaotic. Frederic sincerely wanted peace with the Papacy, and was now making war upon the democratic Romans. At length the Emperor made it possible for the cardinals to meet, and they elected Innocent IV, who was said to be conciliatory.

He, on the contrary, in the words of a neutral historian, "surpassed all his predecessors in the ferocity and unscrupulousness of his attacks upon the Emperor." Some historians, while censuring the methods he used, count him the last great Pope of the school of Innocent III. They do not seem to have inquired closely why his death let loose in Christian Europe such a flood of disdainful epithets and stories. Matthew of Paris, speaking of his notorious nepotism, tells us a story which was then in circulation to the effect that, when Innocent lay dying and saw his weeping relatives round the bed he asked: "Why do you weep? Haven't I made you rich enough?" Another story is that one of his cardinals saw in a dream what passed when the Pope reached the judgment-seat. He was charged with introducing the money-changers into the Temple and destroying the three pillars of the Church: faith, justice, and truth. It is at least clear that

he was most severely censured throughout Christendom for nepotism and for pursuing his destructive campaign against Frederic out of personal hatred and desire of territory.

At first Frederic, who was not in a strong position at the time of the election, sought absolution by promising to return the Papal States. The Pope laid down conditions which no one expected Frederic to accept, and, when Frederic did agree to a treaty on those lines provided the text was kept secret, copies of the treaty were sold publicly in Rome for a few coppers. Frederic pressed for a personal interview, and the Pope left Rome to meet him. Then, by what one of Innocent's chaplains calls " a wise and salutary fiction," the Pope announced that he had discovered a plot of the Emperor to capture him. He fled to Lyons, and from there he appealed to the Kings of England, France, and Aragon to receive him. All refused. When he summoned a General Council of the Church at Lyons, only a hundred and forty bishops attended, and the debates were acrimonious; but the Pope again excommunicated Frederic and declared his crown forfeit. No monarch dare accept the Pope's invitation, as the sentence really was, to invade Frederic's territories, but Innocent is said to have spent 200,000 gold marks in fomenting rebellion from Sicily to Germany. Swarms of friar-dervishes were sent among the people; just as such men preach a holy war in the more backward provinces of Islam to-day. Even money contributed for the Crusade in the East was used against Frederic. Several plots to murder him were inspired.

Frederic sent a remarkable appeal to the Christian monarchs of Europe to unite with him in putting an end to the scandal, but he made the fatal mistake of attacking the whole of the clergy as well as the Pope: " these priests," he said, " who serve the world, who are intoxicated with sensuality, who despise God, because their religion has been drowned in the deluge of wealth." Let kings

unite with him and "deprive the clergy of all superfluity." Royal fingers must have itched in every country, but although, quite apart from the heretics, men sang disdainful songs everywhere about the greed and sensuality of the clergy, any attempt to carry out such a plan would have brought unimaginable confusion upon Europe. Probably, too, the French, English, and Spanish kings did not fancy the sceptical Frederic, with his Moslem mistresses and black eunuchs, as a religious reformer. It is significant that they expressed no horror or surprise at the revolutionary proposal, but they left Frederic to wear himself out in crushing the revolts which the Pope inspired. He died in 1250; and at the news of his death Innocent broke into a wild and indecent rejoicing. "Herod is dead," he wrote; "let the heavens and the earth rejoice." The sober feeling of Christendom was expressed by the learned and orthodox Matthew of Paris:—

> Frederic, the greatest of earthly princes, the wonder of the world and the regulator of its proceedings, has departed this life.

He had done more for the thirteenth century than all its Popes.

Pope Innocent had sworn that he would exterminate the "brood of vipers," as he called the last representatives of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. There remained now only Conrad, a youth of twenty-two, Frederic's sole legitimate son and heir to the Empire, and Manfred, an illegitimate son of fine character and great accomplishments. Manfred ruled the southern kingdom for Conrad, whom he now summoned from Germany, and the war continued. Innocent left Lyons, where he had been for seven years, and it was still two years before he was invited to Rome. In fact, the Romans were so offensive that he soon left the city once more. He excommunicated Conrad, who traversed Italy in triumph, and refused the most

reasonable offers of reconcilation. He next, on the ground that Sicily was a fief of the Papacy, offered it to the French, who refused, and to the English king, who was not unwilling to accept it for his youngest son. But Conrad died in 1254, leaving as issue only a boy of two years, Conradin; and the Pope, cynically ignoring his engagement to the English king, who had paid him an immense sum of money, made peace with Manfred and appointed him Papal Vicar in Sicily. When, however, the Pope brought a swarm of hostile and avaricious followers to Naples, Manfred saw that he was to be duped and destroyed, and he left the city and gathered an army.

Innocent died at Naples soon afterwards, and the cardinals elected a fat and amiable man Alexander IV, who, as usual, is described as a pious man of God who above all things desired peace. He sought it by excommunicating Manfred and telling Henry III of England that his vow to go on Crusade would be fulfilled by sending an army, or the money to provide an army, to conquer Sicily for the Papacy; and he interpreted the Crusade-vow of the King of Norway in the same ingenious manner. But in seven years of this kind of diplomacy, disturbed by incessant quarrels with the Romans, who were as turbulent as ever, he accomplished nothing. At his death Manfred had all Sicily, and there seemed to be some prospect of his becoming King of Italy.

The son of a French shoemaker then became Pope Urban IV, and he swore to carry out Innocent's plan to exterminate the brood of vipers. He turned to his native France and offered the crown of Sicily to the Count of Anjou, the younger brother of Louis IX: a prince who, since Louis is counted a saint, may by comparison be described as a devil. Louis objected that it was dishonourable to break the treaty with England, but the Pope overruled his scruples, and Charles accepted. Urban died before the war began, and, after a fierce struggle of cardinals who favoured peace with Manfred and their

opponents, another Frenchman, Clement IV, obtained the tiara; and he at once set out to drain Christendom of money for the war. Louis IX's vow to go on Crusade would be fulfilled, he assured him, by helping to exterminate "the poisonous brood of a dragon of poisonous race."

What we may call the foreign policy of the Papacy during a thousand years not only brought an incalculable volume of savage warfare and misery upon Italy, but it can be relieved of the charge of stupidity only on the ground that the Popes were determined at any cost to have an earthly kingdom and its revenues. In pursuance of that purpose they wrecked one attempt after another to lift Italy out of its semi-barbarism, and they thus unquestionably retarded the restoration of civilization in Europe. They had destroyed the splendid early work of the Visigoths and the Lombards. They had then entered upon two centuries of devastating struggle with the Germans whom they had invited into Italy. Now, in blind indifference to the brutal character of the French prince whom they summoned and callous insensibility to the sufferings of Italy, they brought a new foreign dynasty to exploit the people and lead in a short time to barbarous scenes. These are facts of history—rather, condensed expressions of a thousand years of history—which make a mockery of the plea that because the Popes taught justice they *must* have helped in the recovery of decency in Europe. The all-but-universal disdain of the Papal gospel of chastity is not a more monumental disproof of their influence than is this responsibility for more than half the chronic warfare in Italy and much of it in Germany.

Manfred, the next most promising prince in Christendom after Frederic, and much more disposed to come to terms with the Pope, was slain in battle; and when the bishop of the district heard that the troops had buried him he—it is said with the Pope's consent, but this is not clear—had the body dug up and desecrated. Charles imposed a cruel imprisonment upon Manfred's widow and

young sons, while the savagery with which this champion and friend of the Pope encouraged his troops to ravage and exploit Sicily is proved by the appalling reaction which we shall see presently. The young Conradin in turn was captured and executed, and the Pope, who had made no protest, died a month later.

The record of Papal elections was surpassed when the eighteen cardinals now wrangled bitterly for three years, eleven of them demanding an Italian Pope and seven looking to France. Charles of Anjou (now of Naples) brought his court to Viterbo, where the cardinals fought, and it was the scandal of one of his nobles murdering an English prince in a church which forced a decision. Gregory X, whom they chose, was a worthy man, one of the few Popes we can respect in this Catholic " Golden Age," but the four years of his pontificate were absorbed in healing wounds. From him dates the law regulating a Papal election and enjoining that the cardinals should be sealed in the election-room until at least two-thirds of them were agreed.[1]

He made an honourable peace with the German Rudolph and promised to crown him Emperor and King of Italy, but he died before the appointed date, and his successor lasted only four months. The unscrupulous Charles now applied the election law in his own way. The cardinals were sealed up in a room with a poor supply of food for eight days; but those who supported his French candidate had better food and were able to keep him informed of the debates. The Italians angrily elected an Italian, who died within three months without even becoming a priest, and they then chose a Portuguese, the most cultivated (or only cultivated) and enlightened Pope of the Middle Ages. He was the son of a medical man and was himself accomplished in Arab-Spanish science; and he despised all monks. He lasted eight months.

[1] Hence the name Conclave or " locked-in " election, as was done at Viterbo.

Nicholas III, who issued out of six months of violent electoral struggle, was the first Pope of the Renaissance type. While no sexual scandal attaches to his name, he was a vigorous, handsome, and very wealthy man of noble birth who loved comfort, and was the most scandalous nepotist that Rome had yet known He gave the cardinal's hat to three of his brothers and four other relatives, and he so wantonly appropriated estates and provinces for members of his family that it was rumoured that he proposed to divide Italy into kingdoms for them. To the new feud in the Papal Court and the city, the conflict of those who favoured and those who opposed France, he added the feud of noble families which was to help in the corruption of the Papacy itself until the Reformation. Other noble families were bound to resent his glorification of his own family, the Orsini. Dante, who lived in the next generation, puts him in hell (Canto XIX) as " one who writhes himself, quivering more than all his fellows and sucked by ruddier flames." His services in the cause of peace were outweighed in the mind of his contemporaries by the sight of his avarice, simony, and nepotism.

Apoplexy removed the epicure within three years, and the vicious fruit of his policy at once appeared. The nobles of the Anibaldi family rose against the Orsini, while Charles lavishly bribed the electors. They went to Viterbo, and the Anibaldi got the citizens to break into the episcopal palace and drag out two of the Orsini cardinals. Martin IV, the new Pope, was a French dummy, a puppet of Charles, who lived in the Pope's palace and dreamed of using Papal influence to help him to become Emperor of the world. His dream was broken by a terrible revolt in Sicily. Pedro of Aragon had married Manfred's daughter, and he entered into a long intrigue with the Sicilians, who hated the French. An insult to their women-folk on a festive day (Easter Tuesday, 1282) fired the smouldering passions, and " the Sicilian Vespers " which followed is still one of the reddest pages

of Italian history. The French were exterminated. Sicilian girls and women whom they had violated were ripped open to rid the island of the last trace of the French, and French women and nuns suffered what the Italians had suffered since the Popes had brought the infamous Charles upon them. Martin—a " gentle " man who had shrunk from the Papacy, according to the apologists—announced a Crusade against the Sicilians and excommunicated Pedro, but the French were beaten, amid scenes of savagery, all over Italy, and in 1285 the Pope's dying eyes looked upon a world in flames.

Honorius IV, who followed him, was aged and gouty, and he lasted a few months. A fiercer Conclave than ever, during which six cardinals died, dragged out for a year, and the tiara now fell to the General of the Franciscan Order, Nicholas IV. This monk has a fragrant memory in Franciscan literature and a malodorous reputation in history. While Italy flamed with just anger at the barbarities of the French, he espoused their cause and promoted it by an act which scandalized Europe. Charles II, son of the King of Sicily, had been captured by the Aragonese, but they were ready to release him if he surrendered his claim to Sicily. A treaty on those lines was drawn up by the Pope's notaries, and in full reliance on the Pope's honour the Spaniards released Charles. Yet Nicholas repudiated the agreement and crowned Charles King of Sicily and Naples. " This decree of Nicholas," says Milman, " was the most monstrous exercise of the absolving power which had ever been advanced in the face of Christendom: it struck at the root of all chivalrous honour, at the faith of all treaties." Nicholas saw France and England, which spurned his offer of mediation, enter upon the long war which ruined both countries. He saw the last Christian possessions in Palestine pass to the Moslem. He died within four years, execrated by all honourable men. It may seem ironic to say that his death closed a line of

" good " Popes and an era of Papal respectability, but in fact the Papacy was now to enter upon a period of corruption even longer, and in some respects worse, than that of the Iron Age.

The excuse which Nicholas gave for his repudiation of the treaty is a good illustration of the kind of " learning " of which admirers of the thirteenth century boast. He said that since the Papacy had declared the war of Pedro against Charles I unjust, no treaty signed during such a war was binding. This was the sort of stuff which the Popes had substituted for the healthy free inquiry of the twelfth century and the science of the Arabs. In the year in which the friar-Pope died (1292), another friar, Roger Bacon, was released from his monastic prison in Paris and allowed to return to England to die. His English friends could not get his release until the " great Pope " died. Rome had suppressed the one scientific genius—for, although it is now acknowledged that Roger's science was purely Arabian, he seems to have had something like a genius for scientific work—who appeared in Christendom during the thirteenth century; and it silenced by promotion to bishoprics others, like Robert Grosseteste in England and Albert in Germany, who enthusiastically recommended the study of science.[1] From that time onward the few who were attracted to science had to work under the shadow of the Inquisition, and more than one suffered torture or death. Science, which has proved the most important element in the restoration of civilization, was excluded from the medieval

[1] The serious errors about Bacon of Professor Lynn Thorndike's book, which relies upon Catholic writers, are exposed in the sketch of the life of Bacon in the fifth volume of my *One Hundred Men Who Moved the World.* The facts about Bacon's long imprisonments are correctly stated in the *Dictionary of National Biography.* As to the patronage of Bacon by Pope Clement IV, we have no evidence that that Pope, who was a violent opponent of the successors of Frederic II, had any interest in science as such. Many liberal prelates of the age patronized alchemy in the hope of getting gold made for them. On the general question, see my Little Blue Book, No. 1142, *The Truth About Galileo and Medieval Science.*

universities, except in a few cities of Italy which defied the Popes, while crowds of youths, most of whom were destined for the clergy or the monasteries, listened to lectures which not one priest in a thousand, and no other person, reads to-day.

CHAPTER VII

TWO CENTURIES OF DEGRADATION

WHATEVER one may think of the determination of the Popes to hold their tainted Temporal Power, which had cost Italy millions of lives and had lit the Church itself with lurid passion since Charlemagne had established that Power, one can listen to no defence of their nepotism. From the thirteenth century until the middle of the sixteenth an outstanding feature of the history of the city of Rome is the savage conflict of the noble families, and in the end we shall find this leading to an extraordinary corruption of the Papacy itself. The "good Popes" of the thirteenth century inaugurated this conflict. Even Innocent III had enriched and ennobled his family. Nicholas III had given such immense wealth and power to the Orsini family that they kept their position for three centuries. Nicholas IV had favoured the Colonna family, who attained equal power and wealth with the Orsini. A papal election now became a crucial moment in the lives of these noble families, since it was vital to their fortunes to have a favourable Pope, and they added a new fire to the furious clash of ambitions which had so often marked these elections (now called Conclaves) since the days of Pope Damasus. The history of these Conclaves is one of the most amazing volumes in historical literature.[1]

At the death of Nicholas IV the Orsini, the Colonna,

[1] Petrucelli della Gattina's *Histoire diplomatique des Conclaves*, 4 vols., 1864–1866. It is, of course, not available in English, but Miss V. Pirie's work, *The Triple Crown* (1935), is based upon it and is equally pungent reading. Neither work is sufficiently critical about sources.

and Charles of Naples brought about a passionate conflict of the cardinal-electors which lasted fourteen months. During most of that time Rome had neither Pope nor Senator (civil governor), and it returned to its familiar methods of controversy: fighting, raping, arson, looting palaces and churches, and robbing pilgrims. This was in 1294, the culmination of the Catholic Golden Age. There was at the time in a remote part of Italy a really religious man of ascetic life, a Benedictine monk who had been converted from the customary monastic ways and had, with some companions, established a strict monastery on the top of a mountain. This was so phenomenal in the latter part of the thirteenth century, when even the Franciscan and Dominican friars were already corrupt, that his fame spread all over Italy, and for some obscure reason the weary cardinals agreed to make him Pope: at least, the reason is obscure in history, but we may gather it presently. So a deputation was sent to bring the holy man to Perugia, where the cardinals were. They were disquieted for a moment when the humble monk ordered them to come to Aquila, but they went, and they consecrated him Pope Celestine V. Shortly afterwards he, under the influence of King Charles, took them with him to Naples, and the daily spectacle of his granting favours to Charles and to outsiders moved the cardinals to demand his resignation.

Chief among the cardinals who pressed him to abdicate was Benedetto Gaetani, a robust and handsome prelate of great ambition and, as we shall see, very peculiar character. While the King of Naples got up popular demonstrations imploring the Pope to remain, Gaetani, who was a skilful diplomatist, urged that he was disloyal to his ascetic ideal. It was widely believed that Gaetani had a speaking-tube put through the wall of the Pope's room, and a " voice from heaven " bade him resign. He did abdicate, and Gaetani became Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303). He was careful to take the

ex-Pope with him under monastic guard to Rome, and, when Celestine escaped twice from his guards, he was imprisoned in a grim and solitary castle and so brutally treated that he soon died. Boniface had made his first enemies: all the pietists of Italy, who accused him of usurpation, bribery, and murder.

The article on Boniface in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* runs to nine pages; and they are nine pages of futility, with many admissions of faults of character and desperate evasions of very foul charges. These charges are said to have been disproved by "grave writers," but these turn out to be, though the reader is not informed of this, Catholics. Milman devotes 150 pages to this miserable Pope, and is not much more satisfactory. We can understand why Dante (Canto XIX) puts him deep in hell, but there was much more than political enmity in the general execration of his memory when he "died like a dog," as a popular epigram said. Gregorovius acquits him of vice on the ground that he was more than eighty years old; yet even the *Catholic Encyclopædia* states that he was only sixty-eight when he died. The truth is that his age is unknown.

A good example of the way in which Catholics now secure "justice" to the Popes will be found in the article on Boniface in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It is written by Professor Rockwell, a distinguished ecclesiastical historian, and until the last edition it explained the hostility to the Pope by saying: "Avarice, lofty claims, and frequent exhibitions of arrogance made him many foes." In the latest edition of the work this sentence has been cut out, and other sentences have been modified, but Professor Rockwell's name has been retained.[1] On

[1] I explained that after the appearance of the last edition of the *Britannica* Catholics boasted in one of their magazines that they had revised it. They were compelled to correct this by a lengthy announcement in the "Agony Column"—never was it better so named—of the *Times* (August 9, 1929). In this they said that they had merely pointed out "certain errors of date and other

the other hand, the *Cambridge Medieval History*, which gives us the general sentiment or judgment of modern historians, says (VII, 5):—

> The evidence seems conclusive that he was doctrinally a sceptic. . . . It is probable that for him, as later for Alexander VI, the moral code had little meaning.

The writer thinks that the detailed charges of vice against him are " suspicious," but a Pope who is admitted in the most authoritative history to have been an unbeliever (in a future life) and indifferent to the moral code invites our closer attention.

In enriching his own family, the Gaetani, especially a nephew of very doubtful character, Boniface entered upon a bitter quarrel with the Colonna, and, when one of these seized a cargo of gold and silver belonging to his nephew, he excommunicated the entire family and deposed the two Colonna cardinals. He, when they resisted, declared a Crusade against them; and under the command of one of his cardinals his army destroyed the property of the Colonna and scattered them over Europe. For a time he prospered in his policy, and he attempted to improve the art and culture of Rome, though the Catholic writer, in boasting of this, does not observe that the first Pope to do something for culture was a sceptic. For this and his wars and nepotism he needed large sums, and he invented the Jubilee year, which the Papacy still periodically celebrates. It had been a custom in ancient Rome to hold a superb festival in each centenary year, and Boniface applied the idea to the year 1300. Rich indulgences were awarded to all who visited Rome as pilgrims, and there was a remarkable response. It was estimated that thirty thousand pilgrims entered and left Rome every day, and that on

facts regarding the teaching and discipline of the Catholic Church." As the example I give in the text is only one of hundreds, the reader will know what to think of Catholic assurances even in the gravest conditions.

any particular day there were two hundred thousand foreigners living in the city. And, since each had to place a coin or coins on the altar of St. Peter, the harvest was rich. One visitor tells how "day and night two clerics stood at the altar of St. Peter with rakes and drew off the infinite sum of money."

This year 1300 is usually assigned as the high-water mark of the power of the Popes, but the more critical study of the thirteenth century which we have made suggests that the peak was rather in the closing years of Innocent III, when freedom of discussion was suppressed. However that may be, the prestige of the Papacy now steadily declined. Boniface brought a new war upon Italy by offering Sicily to Charles of Valois, brother of King Philip of France, and making him Governor of Tuscany, the cities of which were aflame with murderous struggles. He then quarrelled with Philip over the contributions of the Church to that monarch's war-chest, and he sent to France a Bull severely condemning him. It was festively burned at Paris, the royal heralds summoning the people to the spectacle.

The King then, in the summer of 1303, summoned his Parlement at Paris, and his Vice-Chancellor, William of Nogaret, one of the ablest jurists of the time, laid before it an impeachment of the Pope for heresy, simony, and rapacity. In a second Parlement Boniface was specifically accused of disbelief in a future life, wizardry, dealing with the devil, declaring that sins of the flesh were not sins, and causing the murder of Pope Celestine and others. King Philip called for a General Council to try the Pope, and the University of Paris, five archbishops, twenty-two bishops, and almost all the monks and friars supported him. He sent an expedition to seize the Pope, and Sciarra Colonna—many of the embittered Colonna were now at the French court—and William of Nogaret led the troop. They seized the Pope at Anagni, but the people, who had at first joined them, turned against them—after sacking

the rich Papal palace—and delivered the Pope. He returned to Rome in so tempestuous a rage that even respectable chroniclers of the time say that he went insane and committed suicide. This is improbable, but he died a month after his return.

The story of Boniface is not yet over. His successor, Benedict XI, lived only eight months—there is the usual cry of poison—and the French or pro-French and Italian cardinals fought for a year over the election of a new Pope, while the Orsini, Colonna, and Gaetani engaged in a savage war all over the Roman province. The Italians at length compromised by voting for a French prelate, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who was understood to be very independent of Philip. " The fox," as he came to be called, had duped the Italians. He had a secret understanding with Philip, summoned the cardinals to Lyons, and was there consecrated Pope Clement V. He settled a few years afterwards in Avignon, which then belonged to the King of Naples (as Count of Provence). He had given the Papacy a new master and had begun the long " Babylonian Captivity " of the Popes. It would be sixty years before Rome would again see the face of a Pope.

Clement soon found, as such Popes always did, that Philip demanded a grim return for the money he had spent. He wanted the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem, or of the Knights Templar, suppressed for vice, so that he could appropriate its vast wealth, and the body of Pope Boniface dug up and burned as a heretic. The French clergy persuaded the King to be content with a trial of Boniface by Church Council, and the Pope then uncomfortably yielded on both points. With his condemnation of the Templars we have no concern; though it is material to tell that the Pope consented to the use of appalling and very extensive torture to exact confessions, and that this most powerful and richest monastic body of the pious thirteenth century was proved to be sodden

with the practice of unnatural vice. When the unreliability of evidence exacted by torture was pointed out to the Pope, he replied that "if the Order cannot be destroyed by way of justice, let it be destroyed as a matter of expediency lest our dear son the King of France be scandalized." The Pope got a large slice of the loot.

It was when Philip pressed for revenge on Boniface that the Pope retired to Avignon, across the frontier of France, but he had to comply. In 1312 a Council met at Vienne, but it dare not hold a trial of the Pope. Catholic historians who say that it acquitted Boniface cannot produce any evidence that it expressed any opinion on the matter. It certainly did not examine the large number of Roman witnesses—mainly priests, monks, and lawyers—whose evidence had been collected, and without torture or coercion, Boniface had, they said, jeered habitually at religion and morals. There was, he had said, no future life and the Eucharist was "just flour and water." Mary was no more a virgin than his own mother, and there was "no more harm in adultery than in rubbing your hands together." This evidence was never examined in court, so we read it with a certain reserve, but there is little room for doubt that the Pope whose reign crowned the beautiful century was, as the *Cambridge Medieval History* says, a sceptic both as regards faith and morals.

Pope Clement himself is accused in some of the chronicles of intimacy with a French countess. We cannot control this statement, but against the Catholic report of his learning and piety we put the undisputed fact that his nepotism and simony were scandalous. Such was his traffic in sacred offices that, although he lived luxuriously and enriched his whole family, and although Italy, England, and Germany sent him little money, he left behind him more than half a million pounds, most of which went to his relatives. It happens that his successor was a sharp accountant, and his accounts

have been published. We thus learn that, after a vigorous struggle with Clement's nephew, a loose-living noble, he got for the Papacy only 150,000 florins of the 1,078,800 florins which Clement had left.

Clement had, instead, left the Church a poisonous legacy. He, a native of Gascony, had made cardinals of three of his nephews and six other Gascons, and they demanded a Gascon Pope. The bitter struggle in the Conclave, while murderous fights filled the streets, was interrupted by an inroad of Gascon troops, and the cardinals fled over the back wall and scattered. For two years they refused to meet, but in 1316 they were enticed to Lyons, shut in a monastery, and told that they could not leave until they elected a Pope. They chose John XXII, an elderly lawyer, though in origin the son of a cobbler. It seems clear that he duped the Italian cardinals. One anecdote of the time says that he swore to the Italians that he would never mount a horse again until he was in Rome. They voted for him, and he went to Avignon *by boat.* The Italians left him, and he thereupon made nine French cardinals, of whom one was his nephew and three others were from his native town. He enriched them all and lived well. He built the Papal Palace at Avignon, and its service cost £25,000 a year—he spent £3000 a year on food and wine—yet he left £400,000 (several millions in modern values) at his death. Contemporaries exaggerated his wealth, so in this case the Vatican has published the accounts he kept.

We are more interested in the source of his wealth. It came chiefly from a sordid expansion of the existing system of exacting heavy fees for every ecclesiastical appointment. The Church had taught for ages that for a higher prelate to accept a sum of money for appointing a man to a benefice or a bishopric was the sin of simony; and this sin was denounced as so heinous that Dante puts simoniacs in a deeper circle of hell than men who were guilty of sodomy. Yet before the end of the thirteenth

century the Popes had begun systematically to raise money by clerical appointments, and John XXII, who is counted one of the good Popes, extended this system until the Papacy exacted three years' income from every priest who was appointed to a benefice and a large sum of money from every man promoted to a bishopric or made an abbot. Clement V had ordered that a priest who was appointed to a benefice (living) must pay his first year's salary ("first fruits") to the Pope. John changed the tax to three years' salary, and said that this was obligatory in the whole of Christendom. Many priests, he found, held more than one benefice. This was shocking; so he distributed them and got a three years' revenue from each. Many of the bishoprics and archbishoprics were too large for the prelate to do his work properly, so he divided them, and he was entitled to a large sum from each new bishop. One prelate was so infuriated by his loss of revenue that he and several of the cardinals entered into a plot, which was fully proved in court, to murder the Pope by the magical method of melting a wax image of him or, if that failed, by poison.

Many other admirable devices came of the good Pope's brooding over money in the famous "little chamber" in which he counted his ducats and florins. If an archbishop or an abbot of a rich monastery died, the Pope made a whole series of promotions, like a game of musical chairs, and got "first fruits" on each. Bishops or abbots were entitled to hospitality, which was costly, when they visited their priests or priories. They might, the Pope ruled, stop at home and take the cost of a visit instead—and send half of it to Avignon. By old custom the people had the right to loot the house of a dead bishop, and the bishop had a right to the property of a dead priest. "The Holy See," Mollat says, "substituted itself" for them, or declared all such property forfeit to itself. All bishops had to visit Avignon occasionally. A fee was fixed for this, besides a number of other fees;

and they paid, under the head of clerical expenses, for every grant or document they required from the Papal Court. The Papacy had—in the most immoral age in history—put such a fence about the sanctity of indissoluble marriage that couples could not marry if they were related within four degrees (back to the great-great-grandfather and laterally to the third cousin). Large sums were made by dispensations from such "impediments" and by discovering the relationship after marriage and declaring it void. Then there were legacies, fines, dispensations of all sorts, "voluntary" gifts, the feudal dues of ten countries, Peter's Pence, and many other sources of wealth. The Church had thundered against simony for six or seven centuries. It was now a fine art; and, as we shall see presently, the art was only in its infancy.

Such was the second-best Pope in a hundred years: though the stricter Franciscan monks, with whom he quarrelled, called him a heretic, Anti-Christ, and the Dragon with Seven Heads. The "best Pope" of the period, on Catholic standards, was John's successor, Benedict XII, a Cistercian monk. There were, however, contemporaries who called him, when he died, "a Nero, death to the laity, a viper to the clergy, a liar, and a drunkard." Mollat, the Catholic historian of the Popes of Avignon, admits that he drank heavily—some writers say that it was this monk-Pope who gave rise to the popular saying, "Drunk as a Pope"—and that his harshness and arrogance narrowly restricted what influence for good he had. We need not study this influence. Like that of all "good Popes," it was superficial and ephemeral. Within a few years of his death we find the Pope and his court and city more depraved than at any period since the Dark Age.

"My predecessors did not know how to be Popes," said Clement VI, who succeeded Benedict and made Avignon the Corinth of medieval Europe. He got pos-

session of the city and the province for the Papacy, which now became responsible for the whole of its civic life, by a cynical act. It belonged to Naples, and Queen Giovanna at this time wanted absolution for murdering her husband and marrying her lover. She received absolution, and the Pope got Avignon—a city with a population of at least 100,000 and a rich country with several towns—for the paltry sum of £40,000. Clement then completed and lavishly decorated the great palace, and he settled down, with the Countess de Turenne and a large number of other ladies, who were permitted to dip their dainty fingers into the simoniac pie, to a life of gaiety. The *Catholic Encyclopædia* admits that Clement was " a lover of good cheer, of well-appointed banquets and brilliant receptions, to which ladies were freely admitted." But the best contemporary authority, Matteo Villani, a strict Catholic, is not content to say that the ladies were admitted to the hunts—Clement had one of the finest studs of horses in Europe—and the banquet-room. While Catholic writers profess to regard the charge of intimacy with the Countess as frivolous gossip, what the Florentine historian says is:—

> While he was an archbishop he did not keep away from women but lived in the manner of young nobles, nor did he as Pope try to control himself. Noble ladies had the same access to his chamber as prelates, and among others the Countess de Turenne was so intimate with him that in large part he distributed his favours through her.[1]

This is mild in comparison with the terrible indictment which the famous Petrarch brings against the Pope and his cardinals and higher clergy in his Latin *Letters Without a Title*: one of the most amazing pictures of vice, natural and unnatural, that is to be found in any literature. He says that Avignon surpassed in vice any city of antiquity; and no one knew ancient life and literature

[1] *Istorie*, in Muratori's *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Vol. XIV, p. 186.

better than Petrarch. It was " swept along in a flood of the most obscene pleasure, an incredible storm of debauch, the most horrible and unprecedented shipwreck of chastity " (Letter VIII). Clement was " an ecclesiastical Dionysos with his obscene and infamous artifices." In the eighteenth Letter he gives details of the life of the cardinals and the higher clergy which I must refrain from quoting.

Apologists fancy that they discredit the testimony of Petrarch, the greatest writer and scholar of his age, by reminding us that he was hostile to the Popes because they would not return to Rome. Since Petrarch lived for years in Avignon and was living not far from it in the time of Pope Clement, they in effect ask us to believe that one of the greatest Europeans of the time fabricated a mass of detail about a life which fell under his own observation! Moreover, besides the witness of other contemporary writers, we now have a description of life in Avignon which shows, from the archives of the Papal city, that there really was a more amazing disregard of the virtue of chastity than in ancient Athens or Rome.[1] The official documents show that before the Popes settled in Avignon there was at least some regard for decency. Loose women were relatively few and were isolated from other women. In the Papal period they had astounding liberty and encouragement. The Pope's marshal levied a tax on them and protected them, even by proceedings in court, from puritan assailants. Monks, nuns, priests, and Papal officials owned brothels or drew revenue from them. We find a public announcement of the opening of " a fine respectable new brothel," and a legal deed, ending " In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ," in which the Papal officials buy a brothel from a doctor's widow. This system was, the documents show, extended to all the towns under Papal control.

[1] *La prostitution du XIII au XVII siècle*, 1908, by Dr. L. Le Pileur. It is a compilation from official records in Avignon and district.

At Clement's death the cardinals wrangled during three months for the glittering prize, and the city was astonished when it fell to a cardinal of strict life, who became Innocent VI. It was usual when the voting disclosed a hopeless deadlock to fall back upon an aged cardinal whom the stronger men could hope to control and who would soon leave the position vacant once more. Innocent was both aged and an invalid, but, to the anger of the cardinals, he lived for ten years, and made a spirited attempt to reform the court and the clergy. But he proceeded in so harsh and improper a way that a religious monk, quoted by Mollat, described him as "more abominable than the Jewish usurers, more treacherous than Judas, more cruel than Pilate." The archives quoted by Dr. Le Pileur show, however, that neither he nor his pious successor, Urban V, succeeded in reforming Avignon, and Urban decided to abandon it.

Urban had been a Benedictine abbot of ascetic life and zealous devotion to ecclesiastical learning. He supported hundreds of students at various universities. We should be inclined to think that there was a better atmosphere in the Papal Court when such a man could be elected, but Petrarch's claim that the cardinal-electors were, literally, overruled by a miracle evidently means that the court was still so corrupt that in the ordinary course of nature a good man had no chance of election. Urban seems to confirm this when, a few years later, he decided to move to Rome. The cardinals pleaded that Italy was a barbaric and pestilential country, and only five of them—this gives us the measure of the reform—set out with him in the spring of 1367. He had to be escorted by an army across Italy, which wanted no more wars over Papal claims of territory, and, although the Romans at first welcomed the return of the golden rain, they drove him out within two years, and he returned to France to die.

Gregory XVI, who succeeded him, was a nephew of

the sybaritic Clement VI, and doubtless this fact influenced the election. His piety, however, of which apologists boast, chiefly took the form of zeal against heresy. Mollat concludes that " in the end his efforts remain sterile," and " anger against the Church continues to grow." The public authorities refused to assist the Inquisition for him, the historian says: another proof of the meanness of the apologists who plead that it was the princes and peoples who demanded the execution of heretics. He was a shocking nepotist, and he deserted Avignon only because Rome and Italy were rapidly moving toward complete independence. He hired an army of half-savage Breton mercenaries to cut a path for him, under the command of the Cardinal of Geneva, across Italy; and even the truculent British mercenary, Sir John Hawkwood, who helped them, was disgusted when, after taking Cesena, the cardinal ordered the massacre of every man, woman, and child in it. The Catholic Dr. Pastor, whose *History of the Popes* opens at this stage, found confirmation of this in a horrified letter of the Archbishop of Prague which is preserved in the Vatican Archives. Rome soon lost its enthusiasm, and Urban retired to the provinces before its anger and died a few months later. The last of the Avignon Popes had been as futile as the first.

I have dealt summarily with what are called the better Popes of the Avignon series because, as we shall now see, they had effected no reform of the Papacy, the Church, or the Christian world. The fifteenth century, which we now approach, is regarded by Catholic writers themselves as decadent, but few of them give their readers even a faint idea of the flagrancy of vice, natural and unnatural, the deliberate defence of this licence by many Catholic writers of the century, the corruption of the monasteries, the vast spread and public encouragement of prostitution, the indecency of the numerous communal baths, the fiendish cruelty which persisted in spite of the efflorescence of art, and the cynical growth of treachery

and lying in international relations. Dr. L. Pastor almost alone among Catholic historians is candid. He says (I, 97) that " the prevailing immorality exceeded anything that had been witnessed since the tenth century " and " cruelty and vindictiveness went hand in hand with immorality." [1] This viciousness we shall find steadily infecting the Papacy itself and hastening the inevitable revolt of Christendom. At the time when Gregory XI returned to Rome, John Wycliffe was rousing England to a revolt which in a few years spread to one-third of the nation, and from England the revolt spread to Bohemia and inflamed hundreds of thousands of evangelical Christians.

Yet just at this juncture the Papacy entered upon what we must in some respects consider a worse degradation than that of Avignon. The Conclave which followed the death of Gregory was as vicious as ever. Eleven of the sixteen cardinals who were locked in a room of the Vatican Palace were French, yet a menacing crowd outside clamoured for an Italian Pope. They broke through the sealed doors and made sure that the French cardinals had no way of escape. Another day they looted the Papal wine-cellar. Urban VI, whom the cardinals at last elected, is, as usual, recommended as pious and virtuous, but he was in fact a gouty and bad-tempered old man who soon quarrelled with the cardinals. One of them called him a liar and threatened to beat him. The French cardinals escaped and settled at Anagni. Their troops met those of the Pope and were defeated, and they moved on to Fondi, where all but four of the Italian cardinals joined them. They made a Pope,

[1] Pastor, a sincere scholar, wrote his *History of the Popes* in reply to the public appeal of Leo XIII to Catholic historians to " tell the whole truth." When his work was completed he sadly discovered that the word of Popes is not always intended to be taken literally. He does not, in any case, tell the whole truth, though his chief fault is that he greatly exaggerates what virtue he can find and his work is thus out of proportion.

Clement VII, of the fighting cardinal who had horrified Europe with the Cesena massacre, and they thus inaugurated the great Schism, which was even more scandalous than the gaiety of Avignon.[1]

The " pious " but very vigorous Urban seized and sold the sacred vessels of the Roman churches, hired a troop of the fierce mercenary soldiers who were then common, and drove his rival to Avignon. Then he set out to recover the Papal possessions in the south. Queen Giovanna had, we saw, been absolved for murdering her Hungarian husband, but Urban summoned a Hungarian prince to Rome, crowned him King of Naples, and sent him to recover the kingdom and get his revenge. When he had done so, Urban went south to secure the rich rewards for his nephews and nieces for which he had stipulated. His favourite nephew broke into a convent and raped a nun, but the Pope compelled the king to overlook this on the ground that " he was young," and reaped a rich harvest by confiscating property and creating new bishoprics. The Hungarian prince was disgusted and sent an army to attack him while he was staying with his nephew.

When the cardinals begged him to check his indecent displays of temper and discussed among themselves a plan of deposing him, he put six of them in the dungeons and had them horribly tortured. Dietrich was there, and he describes how the Pope read his breviary in a loud voice to drown the moans, while his nephew jeered at the victims. After a time the Pope escaped with his prisoners and fled by sea to Genoa. Only one of the cardinals was ever heard of again, and few doubt that he had them killed. Urban, who flitted from town to town, the vices of his nephew causing him to be repeatedly expelled, tried to raise money for a Crusade against Naples by a

[1] The best contemporary work, from which these and the ensuing details are taken, is the *De Schismate* of Dietrich von Neheim, a German lawyer of high character, in the Papal service, who witnessed the worst outrages he describes.

new Jubilee. Christ had lived thirty-three years, he said, so that there ought to be a Jubilee year every thirty-three years. He died, under suspicion of poison, in 1389: a chaste, and thoroughly disreputable, Pope.

His successor, Boniface IX, reaped the profit of the Jubilee and whipped up the trade in sacred offices until the Papal bureaux looked like an Exchange. The Pope's agents now sold, not simply a vacant benefice, but the " expectation " of one, so that a staff watched the age and health of incumbents; and if, when an expectation was sold, another priest offered a larger sum for it, the Pope declared that the first priest had cheated him, and sold it to the second. Dietrich says that he saw the same benefice sold several times in a week, and that the Pope talked business with his secretaries during Mass. The city cursed him and was in wild disorder. He announced another Jubilee in 1400, and the raping, murdering, and robbing of pilgrims were revolting. The French had meantime elected Benedict XIII as successor to Clement, but with the condition, which he promised on oath to fulfil, that he would make every effort to end the schism. When he became Pope, he refused to take a single step toward this end. All France demanded his abdication, and he had to defend the Avignon Palace against a French army, yet the greedy and vindictive Spaniard clung to his Papal rags, while all Europe derided him, for twenty years.

The economic development of Europe had by this time led to the appearance of a middle class, and the lay lawyers especially began to take a very critical interest in the scandalous condition of the Church. They joined with the universities and the less frivolous of the prelates in seeking a remedy, and gave rise to what was called the Conciliar Movement, or a theory that General Councils had the power to depose unworthy Popes and reform the Church.

The impulse was not one of pure virtue. Both Popes

exacted large sums of money, often by the most disgraceful means. Boniface at Rome employed as his Chamberlain a cardinal whom we shall find later, as Pope, condemned by the Church for every vice in the calendar. This man carried to its utmost licence the traffic in religious appointments which John XXII had initiated, and he may be regarded as the author of the system of selling indulgences which grew to such cynical proportions that it shook the Papacy. The road to Rome and the streets of Rome itself were infested with more bandits than ever, and the reports which pilgrims brought back to Germany and Scandinavia were gravely intimidating. So the Papacy, declaring, in the usual unctuous language, that it could not suffer its children in the north to be deprived of the indulgences which one earned by a visit to the Roman churches, decreed that the same indulgences could be gained by paying to the Pope's local representatives the money which a pilgrimage to Rome would cost. A new gold-mine was thus opened to the Papacy.[1]

Boniface died, and the " gentle and virtuous " Innocent VII who succeeded him maintained the schism and enriched his relatives; and these were so insufferable that Rome expelled them and the Pope, with the customary bloodshed. Gregory XII soon took his place, solemnly swearing that he would even go on foot to meet the rival Pope and end the scandal. Then, after following with disgust for three years the tergiversations of the two miserable Popes, a Council of cardinals, prelates, and royal representatives met at Pisa (1409), declared both

[1] It is hardly necessary to explain that an " indulgence " does not mean permission to commit sin, but, since it is supposed to give relief from the punishment of sin in purgatory, it often has the same effect. In the last century, when indulgences (*bulas*) were still sold in Spain, a loose-living Spaniard would say, " Tengo la bula para todos " (" I have a bula that covers everything "). The Catholic claim that the indulgences are not " sold " because the money is an " alms to the Church " merely shows the kind of atmosphere in which the Catholic laity are kept docile.

Popes deposed, and elected Alexander V, a Franciscan friar. He died without reaching Rome, and, although the two existing Popes took no notice of the sentence of the Council, the Italian cardinals created a third Pope, John XXIII, the most corrupt man who had yet worn the tiara.

The vices of Cardinal Cossa, who had bribed the electors, were well known to them and to all Italy, and nothing could show more plainly than this election the depth to which the Papacy had sunk. Whether he was, as Dietrich says, the son of an Italian pirate, we need not stop to consider. He had been for fifteen years the head of the corrupt financial system of the Pope, and had led the Papal troops and mercenaries with all the ferocity and looseness of commanders of that age. It was widely believed in Italy that, as Dietrich says, he had as Papal Legate at Bologna corrupted more than two hundred women and girls and had exacted a commission from the gamblers and prostitutes. On these matters it is enough to say that the cardinals, like all other Romans, were aware of his reputation, and we will be content with the official ecclesiastical description of his character.

After contemplating the disgusting spectacle of the three greedy Popes for four years, the prelates and leading laymen of the Church persuaded the Emperor Sigismund to convoke and preside at a General Council at Constance in 1414. Twenty-nine cardinals, thirty-three archbishops, nearly three hundred bishops and abbots, and a hundred doctors of law and divinity (including John Hus) met in the city, with representatives of most of the princes of Europe. Christendom was at last united and determined.[1] John, ill with apprehension, sent an

[1] In further illustration of what I said about the moral condition of Europe I may add that, according to contemporary writers who were present, more than a thousand loose women gathered at Constance for the duration of the Council. Catholic writers who call this a gross exaggeration have not the least idea of the amazing extent and flagrancy of prostitution in the Middle Ages. Sigismund

offer that he would abdicate if they would appoint him Perpetual Legate for the whole of Italy with a salary of £15,000 (equal to £75,000 now) a year. They ignored him and, after hearing witnesses, drew up a long indictment of him which is a complete catalogue of vice and crime. It ran to fifty-four articles, and may be read in any collection of Councils. John is described as " wicked, irreverent, unchaste, a liar . . . inhuman, unjust, cruel . . . the dregs of vice, the mirror of infamy . . . guilty of poisoning . . . sacrilege, adultery, murder, spoliation, rape, and theft." So this moral monstrosity was condemned to a very comfortable detention for a few years—his rank of cardinal was later restored and the Bolognese raised a beautiful monument to his memory—and John Hus was burned at the stake. And after two years' further wrangling a new Pope, Martin V, was elected; and he and each of his successors made solemn oath to reform the Papacy and the Church. They, in fact, sank deeper than ever into the mire.

himself had the morals of his age, and he publicly thanked the authorities for making the brothels free to his men when he visited cities. He once danced half-naked in the street with the women. This was the man who burned John Hus.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INEVITABLE REFORMATION

We have covered a period of general degradation, with short intervals of zealous but futile Popes, from the accession of Boniface VIII in 1294 to the accession of Martin V in 1417. That debasement of the Papacy lasts, again with short intervals of sobriety, until the accession of Paul IV in 1555, when the loss of half their revenue enforces a reform upon the shuddering Popes, cardinals, and prelates.

Catholic writers reflect sombrely upon the wickedness of the Roman Empire and tell their readers how the "Holy See" purified the city of Rome and thrust into a dark past the "nameless vices" of the Greeks and Romans. Few of their readers ever take the trouble to calculate, from accepted historical manuals, that Emperors of debased character occupied the throne only during about thirty out of the 350 years of the Pagan Empire—until the accession of Constantine—and still less know, for this they are forbidden to read, that in the later Middle Ages, long after the last barbaric invasions, the Papal throne was occupied during seventy-five out of 250 years by men of notoriously vicious character, and during more than two-thirds of the remainder of the period by men whose character, considered in relation to their professions, no historians respect. Indeed, if simony and nepotism are vices in Popes, there were only four or five "good Popes" in these two and a half centuries, the culminating period of Papal power, the great age of medieval art. That less of them were unchaste during their pontificates than had been the case from

900 to 1050 we fully acknowledge. Their average age at election was fifty-six.

The difficulty of classifying Popes as good or bad is seen in the case of Martin V, who was appointed to reform the Church and to convoke every few years a Council which should verify the reform. Bishop Creighton, a Protestant of the more lenient school, feebly condemns Martin in his *History of the Papacy* and admits his " entire failure to accomplish any permanent results." Pastor weakly defends him, but admits that, against his oath, he never held a Council during the fourteen years of his pontificate; that he was a most flagrant nepotist; and that he effected no reform. The Catholic historian says:—

> A thorough reform of ecclesiastical affairs might in this interval have been undertaken, but Martin allowed the precious time to pass almost in vain as far as this important work is concerned.[1]

The truth is that neither Martin himself nor the great majority of his cardinals and the higher prelates of Europe wanted reform. Their life was too comfortable. Martin was a Colonna, and he devoted most of his reign to securing wealth and the Papal territories, in large part so that he could enrich his family. Neither he nor any other Roman had a mind to check the traffic in ecclesiastical offices, dispensations, etc., which had reached such scandalous proportions. He was thus flagrantly guilty of perjury, simony, and nepotism, yet he is counted one of the good and virtuous Popes.

But there is another way, which Creighton and Pastor avoid, of approaching his character. A good deal of the Italian literature of this century is more obscene than any Greek or Latin works, and one of the writers, Poggio

[1] I, 240. Nearly all the statements made in this chapter are found also in Pastor's fifteen-volume work. Where I differ I give the testimony of contemporary writers. But on the general degradation of morals, especially in Rome and Italy, there is little to add to Pastor's description in the introduction to Vol. V.

Bracciolini, was the Pope's chief secretary and wrote much of his work in the Vatican. He had been employed at the Council of Constance, and from here he had gone to Baden. To a friend he wrote a letter of enthusiastic praise of the amorous licence that was practised by the two hundred thousand people—" there are nuns, abbots, friars, and priests, and they often behave less decently than the others," he says—who visited the baths.[1] Poggio wrote a collection of indecent stories which was so popular that, when printing was invented, twenty-six editions of it were issued in a quarter of a century. He says in a letter to a friend that the Pope was " greatly amused " when an abbot told him that he had five sons who would fight for him. In any case, we can hardly regard as deeply religious a Pope who kept as his principal secretary for years one of the most notoriously indecent writers in Rome. Other writers in Poggio's circle publicly glorified unnatural vice, which then, as Voigt, one of the chief authorities on the period, says, " raged like a moral pestilence in the larger towns of Italy." It was far worse than it had been in ancient Athens or Rome.

Murmurs against the Papacy now filled Europe once more, and Martin was compelled to announce that a Council would meet at Basle in 1431. He died before the date, and an Augustinian monk became Pope Eugenius IV. He had taken an oath to support the Council, yet he at once sent orders to the prelates who had assembled at Basle to disperse. His own Legate at Basle, Cardinal Cesarini, warned him that this would bring upon him a charge of " the grossest hypocrisy," but, because a Council in Germany would be beyond Papal control, he persisted for two years, until the Emperor insisted upon the continuance of the Council,

[1] There is a French translation of the letter by A. Méray, *Les bains de Bade au XV^e siècle*, 1868. Poggio owned to fourteen natural children.

and a new democratic revolt of the Romans drove the Pope into a nine-year exile. He was still jealous of the Council, though he made no effort himself to destroy the corruption which it exposed. One of its secretaries, Ænæas Sylvius—later a Pope, but at that time very anti-Papal and immoral—reports that the Emperor ordered an elderly German bishop to submit to it that the only way to correct the general immorality of the clergy was to abolish the law of celibacy. This bishop, he tells us, said in his address:—

> Scarcely one priest in every thousand would be found to be chaste: all lived in adultery or concubinage or something worse.[1]

Yet Eugenius seized the first pretext to dissolve the Council. The Greeks, who were hard pressed by the Turks, wanted help on almost any terms. Eugenius ordered the transfer of the Council to Italy and, when it refused, his Legate stole its seal and stamped it upon a forged document which made the Council accept the Pope's authority. Eugenius rewarded him with the cardinalate. The Greeks disappointed him, and the Basle Council went on to depose him; but the Council destroyed its own prestige by electing an anti-Pope and taking a heavy bribe from him to meet its expenses.

The apologists find it difficult to show that Eugenius accomplished much during the sixteen years of his pontificate. He was certainly a religious man of sober, even ascetic, habits. He was no nepotist, and he made a modest beginning in Rome of the art and culture which had for two centuries flourished in every other part of Italy. But he neither corrected the flagrant practice of simony nor improved the appalling moral tone of Europe. Pastor admits that in trying to force the Colonna to surrender the wealth which Martin V had showered

[1] *Commentary on the Acts of the Council of Basle* (Fea edition), p. 57. Other contemporaries make it clear that by "something worse" he means incest and sodomy.

upon them he resorted to "hasty and over-violent methods." It is a mild way of expressing the fact that he spread fire and blood over Italy, put two hundred of the Colonna and their supporters to death, had some of them tortured, and looted and destroyed their castles and palaces, including the palace of Martin V. For Rome he had done so little that when, at the close of his long exile, he returned to it, he found cows grazing in its streets, while in the winter wolves prowled from the hills as far as the Tiber.

Nicholas V (1447–1455) began the lifting of Italy, in respect of art and culture, above the barbarous level at which it had persisted during the two centuries when the Renaissance had clothed the cities of the north with beauty. He had been educated at Florence, and when he at length succeeded in filling the empty treasury by means of a Jubilee year, he set about the embellishment of Rome. It is said that when Pope Urban returned to Rome from Avignon in 1367 sheep and cattle nibbled grass, not merely in the streets, but in the churches of St. Peter and the Lateran. Very little had been done beyond the repair of the churches until the pontificate of Nicholas, who imported artists and scholars and began to redeem Rome from the profound disdain of men who came from the cathedral cities of France and England and the Italian cities which had long been famous for painting, sculpture, and classical studies. Rome was the last of the Italian cities to be reached by the glow of the Renaissance.

It concerns us more here that Nicholas did almost nothing for the reform of the Church. He secured the dissolution of the reform-council of Basle and at once, as Pastor says, "the reforming zeal of his early days cooled down." He sent a cardinal to reform the morals of the German monks and clergy, because the threat of revolt was there becoming serious, but the corruption of Italy, which was to pass into Rome itself with the imported

art and culture, he left unaltered.[1] Pastor quotes a letter of a zealous Carthusian monk severely blaming his indifference to the moral state of Italy. Although he had been forty-eight years old at his accession, he lasted only seven years; and the latter of these were embittered by the fall of Constantinople (1453), the last Christian city in the East, to the Turks, and by another democratic revolt, which he bloodily suppressed, of the Romans. He died, soured and disillusioned, in 1455.

Calixtus III, who succeeded him, was an old man of seventy-seven, a Spanish cardinal of regular life and some repute for ecclesiastical learning. It again enforces my point, that it is immeasurably more important to study the effect of the policy of a Pope than to ask if he was good or bad, when we learn that in a pontificate which lasted only three years this virtuous Pope did more harm than any three vicious Popes. All the world knows the name Borgia and associates with it a vague impression of monstrous corruption. Calixtus was of the Spanish Borgia (or Borja) family, and he brought that poisonous brood into the Papal Court and helped to corrupt it. The Orsini and Colonna cardinals had reached the usual deadlock in the Conclave, in spite of heavy bribery, and they had decided to put the aged and gouty Spaniard in the chair, each side hoping to gain a little more strength before he died. To their great anger, he gave them a new rival in wealth and power by transplanting his own family to Italy. He assigned the most profitable office in the Papal Court, the Vice-Chancellorship, to his nephew Rodrigo, who was to become the infamous Alexander VI and was already notorious for his vices. The purblind pontiff despised the art and culture which Nicholas had introduced and spent all available funds in a fruitless attempt to launch a Crusade

[1] Nicholas gave a generous gift (more than £1000) to Filelfo for writing a book of satires which J. A. Symonds describes as "the most nauseous compositions that coarse spite and filthy fancy ever spawned."

against the Turks and in enriching his nephews and their friends. As soon as his illness reached a mortal stage, the Romans rose against " the Catalans " and scattered them.

But the handsome and frivolous Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia returned to his Vice-Chancellorship. He had, while his uncle lived, handed to Cardinal Piccolomini many of the profitable ecclesiastical appointments which it was his function to distribute, and this cardinal now became Pope Pius II. I have previously in this chapter referred to him under the name of Ænæas Sylvius, secretary of the anti-Papal Basle Congress and one of the Humanist writers who defiantly defended—especially in letters which one may read in Voigt's life of him—his adulteries. He was now fifty-three years old and virtuous, and he had made his peace with Rome after the fall of the Basle Council. During the six years of his rule he disappointed everybody and drove the Romans into a revolt which he cruelly suppressed. He did nothing for art and culture; in fact, a foolish letter which he wrote to the Sultan, in an effort to convert him when the Christian monarchs refused the Crusade, makes us wonder how Milman can call him a man of " consummate ability." Rome almost sank back into barbarism. At one time a band of three hundred youths terrorized it, sacking houses and raping women on the street in the old fashion.

At his death in 1464 several cardinals of the new type, rich and sensual, tried to bribe their way to the " Holy See," but these were still in a minority, and a Venetian cardinal was elected and took the name of Paul II. He was comparatively young, exceedingly handsome—he actually proposed to take the name Formosus (" Beautiful "), but his friends checked him—and full of promise to be a good Pope and to see that the Crusade was launched. And he at once repudiated his oath and settled down, quarrelling violently with the Court, to a life of luxury. A very wealthy cardinal died and left

millions, in money and jewels, to his nephews. Paul declared the will void and appropriated the treasure. He added to the immense hoard of pearls and spent hours gloating over them. Rome, which Catholics are taught to regard as the " Mother of Art," was still the least artistic of the leading cities of Italy, yet Paul II left at his death a private treasure worth, in modern money, several millions. He burned classical literature. . . . However, as Pastor sums up his reform work in a modest claim that " he cannot be charged with absolute inaction " and Gregorovius describes him as " wholly given over to sensual pleasure," we pass on.

The cardinals sealed his treasure-chamber, with its unique collection of pearls, and swore that whoever was elected Pope should use it for the Crusade; and a few years later the Cardinal-nephew of the new Pope, Sixtus IV, smothered his favourite mistress, Teresia, with pearls, even her slippers being covered with them. Sixtus was a virtuous monk, General of the Franciscan Order; and he surpassed all other Popes in the enrichment of relatives whose luxurious vices were as well known in Italy as are the sayings of Mussolini to-day.

Three months after his consecration he summoned his two nephews, who belonged to the peasant class and were friars, to Rome, made them cardinals, and poured wealth upon them. The elder, whom we shall meet later as Pope Julius II, drank and swore heavily as he led the Pope's troops. He is acknowledged to have had three daughters while he was a cardinal, and he was confidently accused by leading nobles of unnatural vice. The younger wore himself out in two years of hectic life " amongst prostitutes and boys," as a contemporary says. His banquets and other extravagances were the talk of Europe, and the whole of the 260,000 ducats—in our values at least a million sterling—which he spent in two years came from ecclesiastical appointments which the Pope conferred upon him. A third nephew, a layman

and most unscrupulous soldier, was the chief author of a plot to murder the Medici princes at Florence during Mass in the cathedral, when Giuliano de' Medici was killed; and the Pope was aware of the conspiracy, though Pastor does not admit that, as many say, he knew that it included murder. In a deed which we still have he legitimized a "son of a cardinal-priest and a married woman": the son of his own Vice-Chancellor, Cardinal Borgia, who kept his office.

So we will not linger to admire his praying and fasting. Under the next three Popes a cynical German priest, Johann Burchard, was Master of Ceremonies at the Vatican Palace and he kept a well-filled diary, which has survived.[1] We are therefore most reliably informed about the events of the next twenty years. At the death of Sixtus, we learn, the conflict of the noble families, to which recent Popes had added their ennobled relatives, the Borgia and the Rovere, was very heated. Each family or cardinal now had a fortified palace, troops of soldiers (even equipped with the new artillery), and immense sums for bribery. But neither Cardinal Borgia nor Cardinal Rovere could get the required two-thirds majority, and there was a danger that a zealous cardinal would get the tiara. Cardinal Borgia therefore selected Cardinal Cibó, whose only virtues were that at the age of fifty-two he had ceased to have mistresses and he would do whatever Cardinal Borgia required. Through him Borgia bribed a sufficient number of the electors, and he became Pope Innocent VIII; a cynical title, for his children were well-known visitors at the Vatican.

During the eight years of his pontificate Rome sank

[1] There is a French edition, in three volumes, of the Latin text by Thuasne (1884). There are, as in all medieval documents, inaccuracies on unimportant details, but Thuasne gives a large number of documents in support of the appalling statements which Burchard makes. Of lying about what he saw no one can accuse him because his diary was not intended for publication; and the Catholic plea that he is unreliable because, in so corrupt a world he writes lightly at times is ludicrous.

back to the moral level of the Iron Age, and it would remain there for the next seventy years: less boorish, but even more vicious and violent. Gregorovius can say only in defence of his beloved city that there was the same "fiendish cruelty" in England, France, and Spain; but presently he admits that crime and vice were "more appalling in the history of the Papacy and the Papal nephews." In a fierce struggle with Naples, in which Cardinal Rovere (later Julius II) led the Papal army and Cardinal Orsini (who swore to have Rovere's head on a pike) led the enemy, the Pope sought the aid of the Medici of Florence. He married his own bastard son Franceschetto, in the Vatican, to the daughter of Lorenzo. Next year he, again in the Vatican, married his granddaughter Peretta with princely pomp; and at the banquet he sat at table with her, her sister, and their mother (his own illegitimate daughter). It gives us some measure of the moral standard of the age when we learn that the only criticism of Christendom was that it was improper for a Pope to sit at table with ladies! The Catholic reader may or may not be relieved to read in Pastor, who tells all these things, that Rome was not worse than the rest of Italy, and that "almost all the Italian princes of the Renaissance were steeped in vice." When Pope Pius II in 1459 visited Ferrara he was received by seven princes, and they were all illegitimate. I may add that the Pope's second granddaughter was later married with the same splendour to a Neapolitan prince.

It is ingenuous of Pastor to tell us that "unfortunately nothing of any importance was done under Innocent VIII for the reform of the ecclesiastical abuses." By his own acts the Pope made them worse than ever. At this time a rebellious younger brother of the Sultan took refuge in Europe and was captured by the Knights of Rhodes. The Pope bribed them to send him to Rome, and kept the dissolute youth in the Vatican, supplying him with

every luxury and instrument of vice. The Sultan paid the Pope £60,000 a year; and the appeal for a Crusade against the Turks now ceased.

Far worse was his toleration of the conduct of his son Franceschetto, a quite unbridled rake; and his "Holy Father" was fully aware of his vices. One day Franceschetto angrily complained to him that Cardinal Riario had cheated him of £50,000 when they were gambling the night before, and the Pope forced Riario to restore the money. Franceschetto and Borgia in collusion made Rome the vilest city in Europe by their system of graft. Even murderers had merely to pay a heavy fine to them. A man who murdered his daughter got off with a fine of £4000. The Pope's son roamed the streets at night with a band of youths, broke into homes, and raped any young woman he desired. Murder became an incident of the daily life. Most of the cardinals wore swords and had troops who slew men even for slight offences.

But the darkest sin of Innocent VIII, who did "nothing of importance" in the way of reform, was that with open eyes he admitted more men of this type into what was called "the Sacred College" (the College of Cardinals). He made a cardinal of the fourteen-year-old son of Lorenzo de' Medici, who was to become one of the most disgusting of the Popes, and of a bastard son of his own brother; and he prepared the way to the College for the infamous Cesare Borgia by making him a bishop. He also intensified the practice of simony or ecclesiastical graft and derived immense sums from it. The majority of the cardinals now gambled, hunted, swore, and otherwise behaved like dissolute nobles. They strutted about Rome dressed as soldiers or in the garb of fashionable cavaliers, with plumed hats and gay vests and mantles.

It is necessary to give this very abridged account of the chronic state of Rome and Italy—the full appalling picture of vice, crime, and treachery will be found in the works of Pastor, Gregorovius, Burckhardt, and Von

Ranke—because Catholic writers represent that the record of the Papacy contains only a " few bad Popes," and the general public has a vague idea that it is almost entirely a question of Alexander VI, the Borgia Pope. The corruption of the Sacred College and the Church, which was almost continuous for two and a half centuries and was abandoned only under pressure of Protestantism, is more important than the number of bad Popes. I do not, in fact, propose to dilate at length on the lives of the immoral Popes who fill the Roman See for the next fifty years. No one will seriously ask how many churches they built or saints they canonized, and only a few points in the historic indictment of their character are disputed. We now have, besides several contemporary diaries, a large number of letters and reports to their governments of the foreign ambassadors at the Vatican, and they uniformly report a condition of extraordinary debasement.

At the death of Innocent the cardinals wrangled and intrigued for fourteen days. If the time seems shorter than usual—it was long enough for their followers to commit more than two hundred murders on the streets —this was only because Borgia, who had amassed enormous wealth, had paid out heavy bribes before the Conclave began. Eleven cardinals sold their votes to him,[1] and he himself must have smiled when, after consecration in St. Peter's, he sat at the door to hear the orators tell him, " Thou art adorned with every virtue, the merit of discipline, the holiness of thy life " —probably four of his children were there—or when, on proceeding to the Lateran Palace, he passed under triumphal arches which bore such mottoes as " Chastity and Charity " and " Cæsar was a man, this is a God." For Alexander VI has a unique record amongst the Popes for the number of his children, and he is one of the few

[1] A Catholic writer in the *American Quarterly Review* (1900, p. 262) says: " That Borgia secured his election by the rankest simony is a fact too well authenticated to admit a doubt."

who continued their amours for years after consecration and in the " Sacred Palace " itself.

In our lenient age a few Catholic writers have even attempted to purify the reputation of Alexander, but Pastor says of these (II, 542) :—

> In the face of such a perversion of the truth it is the duty of the historian to show that the evidence against Rodrigo is so strong as to render it impossible to restore his reputation.

He shows that we have legal proof that Alexander had six children, and Thuasne reproduces the documents, which are in the possession of a Spanish descendant of the Borgia.[1] At least four of these were children of a Roman married woman, Vannozza dei Cattanei, whom he lodged in a palace near his own, and who was on the most friendly terms with the cardinals and the ambassadors under the pious Popes Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII. Just before he became Pope he discarded the ageing Vannozza and took as his mistress Giulia Orsini, a fifteen-year-old girl of the Farnese family whom he married to an Orsini;[2] and for four or five years at least after his consecration she was his mistress and a conspicuous figure in the Vatican Palace. The ambassadors often speak of meeting her. She lived with the Pope's daughter Lucrezia, instead of with her husband, and the ambassadors say that Alexander was the father of her daughter, Laura. The only seriously disputed point is whether a boy born in 1497, when Alexander was sixty-five years old, was the Pope's son by a married woman, the young daughter of his Chamberlain. The Venetian Senator

[1] In the Appendix to Vol. III of his edition of Burchard's *Diarium*. Another Catholic writer, the Comte H. de l'Espinois, exposes the desperate apologists in the *Revue des Questions Historiques*, April 1, 1881, p. 367.

[2] She is the heroine of my historical novel *The Pope's Favourite* (1917, out of print), and she is the model of a very spiritual Madonna by Pinturicchio on a wall of the Vatican. The state of Rome may be gathered from the fact that it was considered a good joke to call her " the Spouse of Christ."

Sanuto says so: one version—there are two—of the birth-certificate of the child acknowledges this; Cesare about this time stabbed the Chamberlain in his father's presence; and a head was found on a pole with the inscription, "This is the head of my father-in-law who prostituted his daughter to the Pope." The evidence is serious.

It is not worth severe inquiry here whether he had six children, as all acknowledge, or eight; but other aspects of his conduct must be noticed. As early as 1460 he had been reported to Pius II for holding obscene dances by young ladies in a garden at Siena—he was already Cardinal and Papal Legate—and he continued to the end of his life to enjoy such spectacles. In his later years the ambassadors speak often of Cesare, who encouraged him, introducing batches of beautiful courtesans into the Vatican, and Burchard gives us astonishing details of one occasion in 1501, when he was nearly seventy. On Sunday, October 11, he says, the Pope did not attend Vespers, but he presided at an orgy in the palace. Fifty choice courtesans were invited, and after the banquet they performed, nude, the chestnut-dance—picking chestnuts, between lighted candles, from the floor—as they danced before the Pope, Cesare, and Lucrezia. The evening ended with an obscene contest of these women, coupled with male servants of the Vatican, for prizes which the Pope presented. It is absurd to suggest that Burchard, one of the chief officials living in the Vatican, would not learn the details correctly from the servants engaged in it; and it is equally absurd to ask us to believe that Burchard, writing for no other eye than his own, falsified them. But we are not surprised that even Pastor's response to evidence fails here.

Some writers, who remind us how regular the Pope was in his prayers and what a deep devotion he had to the Virgin Mary, ask us to regard him as sharing the widespread sentiment of his age that the insistence upon chastity was an error of the early Church, and that one

could be a good Christian yet ignore it. But his character fails also on every other test. We may set aside as negligible gossip the charge of his enemies that he had incestuous relations with his daughter; and the popular belief that he made a liberal use of poison in his later years is in serious history reduced to two disputed deaths. But his support of his son Cesare argues a totally unprincipled character. Lucrezia, though doubtless loose in her early years, as every woman in that circle was, does not deserve the horror which people now associate with her name, but Cesare was a coldly inhuman monster.

As early as 1497 he had his younger brother Juan, Alexander's favourite son, murdered out of jealousy. It is, at least, now the quite general opinion of historians that he was guilty, and the Pope's attitude afterwards confirms this. He refused to speak to Cesare for weeks, and he began to talk of reforming the Church: a mood which lasted a few months. A year or two later Cesare had Lucrezia's husband murdered, because he wanted her to contract an alliance of greater political advantage, yet the Pope continued to support him. Cesare resigned the cardinalate which his father had conferred upon him and set out to win a secular principality by the vile methods which have made his name more malodorous than that of Nero: for Cesare was a man of clear and powerful intellect. The Pope supported him until he died. He thus nourished the moral poison in the veins of Italy, and he ensured the continuance of the rule of corruption in the Papal Court by selling the "dignity" of cardinal to further rich sensualists. He is said to have made £60,000 at one promotion. This was the Pope who had the ascetic preacher Savonarola hanged at Florence.

We will therefore not waste time on his foreign policy or on his share in the artistic improvement of Rome. Alexander closed his infamous career—the poison-story is not now admitted—in 1503, and a "good Pope," Pius III, succeeded him. But Rome soon knew that this

was no sign of reform or remorse. The French had now succeeded the Germans in power in Italy, and Giuliano della Rovere found his ambition foiled by a powerful French candidate. He had therefore secured the election of a cardinal whom he knew to be stricken with mortal disease, and the new Pope died ten days after his consecration, leaving the way open for Cardinal Giuliano, nephew of Sixtus IV, who had fought for the Papacy for twenty years.

Julius II, as he named himself, is one of the great Popes, but even the apologist with the least sense of humour does not venture to call him one of the good Popes. " A soldier in a cassock " is the just description of him by the ablest historian of that age, Guicciardini. Gregorovius, who is never unduly prejudiced against Popes, considers him " one of the most profane and most unecclesiastical figures that ever occupied the chair of St. Peter," and says that there was " not a trace of Christian piety in him."

The defence of the Catholic apologists is little more than a feeble reply to the charge of lack of piety and neglect of reform. They say that he regularly attended Mass and other services—to which we may reply that so also did Alexander VI, even on the day on which he presided at an orgy that equals anything described by Athenæus or Apuleius—and that he had to postpone the reform of the Church and of Rome until the reconquest of the Papal States, which absorbed all his energy, was completed. He, in other words, set the acquisition of territory and the erection of beautiful buildings at Rome above the reform of the Papacy and the Church, which we can hardly consider a proof of piety; and we have no means of judging whether he would have carried out the moderate schemes of reform with which he dallied in his later years. The Lateran Council which he summoned certainly did not effect reform, and he convoked it—to meet after his death—for obvious political reasons. That

he was moderate in his nepotism, and that he checked the reign of violence in Rome and adorned it with noble buildings and other works of art, all admit.

There is thus little difference of opinion in regard to his work, and if we consider his personality, which is one of the most clearly defined in the record of that age, we understand. He was of peasant extraction: a tall, robust man of immense energy and fiery temper. His uncle, the friar-Pope Sixtus IV, had brought him to Rome, and there, leaving the morbidly luxurious use of the new wealth to his cousin, he became a cardinal-soldier with a life-long ambition to reach the Papal throne. No one questions that he lived loosely, for as Pope he made open provision for his three natural daughters. That he was also addicted to unnatural vice Catholic writers heatedly deny, but in this they arbitrarily reject the emphatic statement of the Duke of Bracciano, one of the leading Roman nobles of the time. The vice was, we saw, extraordinarily rife in Rome and Italy, and Giuliano had no more restraint than the majority of the cardinals.

On campaign, it is admitted, he drank and swore like any other soldier, and his rages, to the end of his life, were tempestuous. He was quite unscrupulous in his policy and engagements. He had secured election chiefly by bribery, by promising to respect the possessions of Cesare Borgia, and by swearing to convoke a reform council within two years and not make war without the consent of two-thirds of the cardinals. After election he entirely ignored his vows and promises. He crushed Cesare, never held a Council, and made war whenever he would. He was in the field half his life, though he had less military ability than his commanders, and he had not the least sense of honour or chivalry. Bishop Creighton, who is much too lenient to these Renaissance Popes, finds his "cynical consciousness of political wrong-doing . . . as revolting as the frank unscrupulousness of Alexander VI."

So we will not here expatiate on his campaign to recover the Temporal Power or on the splendid artistic work (the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's, the Vatican, Raphael's frescoes, etc.) with which he adorned Rome. Any encyclopædia article will tell of them. These things, splendid as the second achievement was, did nothing to check the rising tide of revolt in Europe. The few cardinals of austere or regular life pleaded in vain, for the small reforms passed by Julius were insignificant, and the massive corruption of the Church remained.

Julius, the man who had used bribery in three Conclaves, had issued a decree against bribery at Papal elections. We have no positive evidence of bribery at the Conclave which followed his death in 1513, but we do know that the cardinals compelled each candidate for the office to sign a promise that he would, if elected, see that they were financially rewarded, and they gave the tiara to a fat, amiable, luxury-loving cardinal whom they could trust. Within five years of the explosive revolt of Luther they—two-thirds of the cardinals—thus elected, almost without discussion, one of the most disgraceful Popes who ever called himself Vicar of Christ.

Giovanni de' Medici was the young prince whom the virtuous Innocent VIII had made a cardinal at the age of fourteen, though any man could have foretold what an education in the palace of the Medici would entail. It is almost enough to say that the apologists who make a pretence of defending Alexander and Julius abandon Leo X to the critical wolves. He satisfied only those, says the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, "who looked upon the Papal Court as a centre of amusement." "He never gave a thought to reform," says Pastor (VII, 5), and "he disregarded the most serious warnings." One of the triumphal arches which the Romans raised for his coronation procession had the cynical motto: "Mars has reigned, Pallas has followed, but the reign of Venus goes on for ever." Is there a parallel to these things in

the history of religion? Yet we are thought offensive if we refuse to speak of the "Holy See" and the "Holy Roman Church."

As a cardinal he seems to have been more discreet than the others, but the belief that he began to indulge in unnatural vice *after he became Pope* was so seriously held in Rome that the two leading historians of his time record it and seem to share it. Pastor here, and in many other cases where Papal conduct is particularly bad, is untruthful. He says that Bishop Giovio, friend and biographer of the Pope, "passes over the whole truth of the accusations brought against the moral conduct of Leo X" (VIII, 81). On the contrary, Giovio, after speaking of his "excessive luxury" and "regal licence," continues:—

> Nor was he free from the infamy that he seemed to have an improper love of some of his chamberlains, who were members of the noblest families of Italy, and to speak tenderly to them and make broad jokes.[1]

He goes on to say that it is proper to believe "that this is gossip," and that it is wicked to "claim to have penetrated the secrets of the night." In other words, he plainly tells his readers that the charge is true, but it is better not to say that you believe it. H. M. Vaughan says in his *Medici Popes* that Giovio alone makes the charge, and may be disregarded. That also is false. The father of Italian history, the contemporary Guicciardini, says that Leo began during his pontifical career to be "excessively devoted to pleasures which cannot be called decent."[2] These are the highest authorities one can quote on Leo X.

It is Leo who is stated by a later and unreliable Protestant writer to have said, in reference to his luxuries

[1] *De Vita Leonis X*, lib. IV, pp. 96–9. I translate his words literally.

[2] *Storia d'Italia*, lib. XVI, c. V, p. 254 in the 1832 edition. Roscoe's *Life of Leo X* is an out-of-date piece of flattery and entirely uncritical.

and pleasures: "We owe all this to the fable of Jesus Christ." On the other hand, the Venetian ambassador assures us that after his coronation he said: "Let us enjoy the Papacy now that God has given it to us"; and he far surpassed in luxury even Clement VI of Avignon. He spent about £300,000 a year, chiefly on jewellers, caterers, buffoons, and parasites; and he obtained this money, at the very time when Luther opened his campaign, by pressing the sale of indulgences and by the grossest simony. The year after his election he sold the archbishopric of Mainz and two bishoprics to a loose-living young noble, Albert of Brandenburg, for £12,000, and permitted him to recover this by the sordid traffic in indulgences which a few years later inflamed Luther. For the greater artists and authors of Italy he did little. He gathered about him a company of gross men: flatterers, writers of obscene comedies (which were performed in the Vatican, often with cardinals as actors), and purveyors of indecent jokes and stories. His chief friend was Cardinal Bibbiena, whose comedies were more obscene than any of ancient Athens or Rome, and who was one of the most immoral men of his time. He had to eat temperately, for he was morbidly fat, but his banquets were as costly as they were vulgar, and the coarsest jesters and loosest courtesans sat with him and the cardinals. Since these things are not disputed, it is absurd to deny the plain evidence of his vices. In public affairs he was the most notoriously dishonourable prince in Europe, but it is not necessary or possible here to tell the extraordinary story of his alliances, wars, and cynical treacheries.[1] His nepotism, in fine, was as corrupt as that of any Pope; and, when some of the cardinals conspired to kill him, he had the flesh of their servants ripped off with red-hot pincers to extract information.

It was in the middle of this sordid pontificate (1513–

[1] See my *Crises in the History of the Papacy* (Putnam, 1916) for lengthy studies of Alexander, Julius, Leo, and Paul III.

1521) that Luther nailed his famous theses on the notice-board at Wittenberg (1517), yet the Dance of Death went on, slowing down a little only in so far as less money arrived from the sale of indulgences. But all that Leo did, when his toying with his collection of jewels was interrupted by the news that a German monk was interfering with his income, was to order his Legate to excommunicate the man and trust he would meet the fate of Savonarola. We will in the next Book consider the progress of the revolt. Here, in view of the attempt of various recent historical writers to claim that the corruption of the Popes and clergy was the least important cause of the Reformation—they make their point, of course, by concealing the whole or the greater part of the corruption from their readers—we will confine ourselves to the character of the Papacy and the condition of Rome.

The reform of the Church is usually said to have begun in 1534, but there was no real reform until 1555, when a prospect of ruin confronted the ecclesiastical sensualists, and the Popes of the intervening period must be treated briefly. A really religious Pope succeeded Leo X, the apologists inform us; but they do not say why, and do not stress how, Rome covered him with ridicule and broke his heart in little over a year. The Conclave, held at a time when half of Germany was in revolt, is described by the Catholic Professor F. H. Kraus in the *Cambridge Modern History* as "a spectacle of the most disgraceful party struggles." The conflict of greeds reached a deadlock, and a Dutch pietist was made Pope Hadrian VI. He could not even speak Italian, and Rome laughed him out of existence. The cardinals were in such a hurry for the next Conclave dog-fight, which took twenty days, that some entered the Sistine Chapel in their plumed hats and silver spurs. Giulio de' Medici, a bastard of the great Florentine family, made the highest bid, and became Clement VII.

He was as treacherous and dishonourable in his public conduct as Leo X, and this conduct brought upon Rome the most terrible punishment. Stung by his perfidy, the Emperor launched his army, part of which was led by a Roman cardinal, upon Rome. The sack of the city, with a poignant account of which Gregorovius closes his famous work, lasted eight days, and the loot is, in modern values, estimated at something more than £100,000,000. Such was the savagery of the attack that the population of Rome was reduced from ninety-nine thousand to thirty-two thousand. Nuns and maids of noble birth were raped in their homes and dragged to the camp. Palaces, churches, and monasteries were blown up or burned. Soldiers caroused with the whores of Rome in St. Peter's, drank wine from the chalices, and played dice on the altars. We read so often of the piety of Spain at this period, when Ferdinand and Isabella had conquered the last of the Moors, that I must point out that the Emperor, Charles V, was the grandson of Isabella and the strictly Catholic ruler of Spain as well as of Germany; and that, therefore, Spanish Catholic troops were even more numerous in this barbarous army, which behaved far worse than the Goths and Vandals, than Lutheran Germans were. Again Papal nepotism and the lust of territory had brought ruin upon the Romans: this time, indeed, the worst rape of a great city in history.

Catholic writers put against this the contemporary activity of various Church-reformers in parts of Italy and the brave refusal of Clement to grant Henry VIII his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. In the latter case, Clement, as Lord Acton pointed out long ago, was governed only by his fear of Spain; and the regional reforms were not effected under Papal inspiration. How little Rome was chastened even by the sight of the ruin of two-thirds of the city was seen at the death of Clement (1534). There was the usual bribery in the Conclave, and the prize fell to Cardinal Farnese, or Paul III, who

had been disdainfully known in Rome for twenty years as "the petticoat cardinal." His only distinction was that his sister Giulia had been the mistress of Alexander VI, who had richly rewarded him. Pastor shows that as cardinal he had four known children, but assures us that he was now sober and virtuous. He was sixty-seven years old.

Yet Pastor gives these further facts, which show that Rome had still no serious idea of reform. In the twelfth year of his pontificate, on the eve of the opening of the Council of Trent, Paul conferred two duchies upon his natural son Pier Luigi, a corrupt and worthless man, and had a new gold coin minted on which the greatness of the Farnese family, which was founded entirely upon the sacrilegious adultery of his sister, was symbolized by a naked Ganymede watering a lily (presumably white).[1] He promoted to the cardinalate two of his boy-nephews, aged fourteen and seventeen, who soon adopted the full licence of their elders under his avuncular eye. He married a grandson, thirteen years old, to an unnatural and immoral daughter of the Emperor, giving the Emperor rights, such as the sale of indulgences in Spain, worth millions a year; and he secured the marriage of a granddaughter to a French prince. He was friendly with the most vicious of the cardinals and appointed others of the same type. He liked to have beautiful women at table, had indecent comedies performed in the Vatican, and was a generous patron of buffoons and astrologers. These are undisputed facts.

It is, therefore, easy to take his measure as a reformer. By the middle of the century the revolt had spread all over the north, England was lost, and Calvinism was widely accepted in France and Switzerland. Everywhere the rebels pleaded the corruption of the Papacy and the Church, and the religious cardinals stormed Paul with entreaties to reform the Church. But the moment he

[1] A copy can still be seen in A. Armand's *Médailleurs Italiens*, I, 172.

proposed to carry a particular reform, which nearly always meant a reduction of revenue, the cardinals and prelates rebelled. The schemes of reform which he instructed the zealots to frame were put aside; and Pastor found that they had been abstracted from the Secret Archives when Leo XIII grandiosely threw these " open to scholars." A very few partial reforms were carried, but there was no reform of morals. Paul had to announce a great Council, but how he tried to prevent it from operating and what really happened at Trent we shall see in the next Book. Paul and the majority of his cardinals still hoped to see the revolt crushed in the old way, and the gaiety of Rome as free as ever.

If further proof is needed, one finds it in the Conclave at the death of Paul in 1549. Pastor takes thirty pages to describe the passionate fifty-days' struggle. And, with half of Europe in flames, they elected a grosser Leo X. There is no dispute about the character of Julius III. His gluttony, vulgarity, and violent temper were notorious. He hunted, gambled, drank so heavily that he often had to stay the night when he dined out, " spiced his feasts with free and unseemly jests," had indecent comedies in the Vatican, and had bull-fights in the square before St. Peter's. He made a favourite of an ugly little gutter-boy and promoted him to the cardinalate. One half of Rome thought the youth his natural son: the other half his *mignon*. These things were " never proved," says Pastor. For five years (1550–1555) this greasy feeder on pork and onions held the position of Vicar of Christ while the revolt rolled over Europe, even France. At his death one of the cardinals with the worst record of all (natural and unnatural vice, fiendish cruelty, etc.) very nearly got the tiara. He was second favourite in the betting. But the reformers had now a fiery leader, and he secured the election of Marcellus II. He lasted twenty-two days, and the leader of the reforming party, Cardinal Caraffa, mounted the throne in 1555.

It was too late. The Reformation was now inevitable. We have to-day historical writers who talk much about social and political changes as causes of the revolt against the Papacy, or who repeat the stupid Catholic claim that the Popes put their house in order without needing the pressure of the Reformation. These writers, of course, consider it indelicate to recall the story of the Popes of Avignon, of the Great Schism, and of the Renaissance, as I have briefly told it; and they lightly take the word of Catholic writers that the Papacy and the Church were quite reformed after 1555, which is false. We shall examine a few recent works of this type later. Here we close the Age of Power. The mighty spiritual power which the good Popes and great Popes had forged, the power which is said to have been so valuable to civilization, had led to the most licentious, most cruel, and most dishonourable period that is known in the history of civilization—I have quoted one authority after another to that effect, and in my *History of Morals* I have studied every other period of licence—and to a corruption of the Papacy itself which had no precedent and has no analogy in the history of religion. It is only men who will not study the corruption who can fancy that Europe—a Europe now fully awake and equipped with the printed page—was not stirred by it to a convulsive indignation.[1]

[1] *The Cambridge Modern History*, our most judicious authority, says that "the world has rarely seen a more debased standard of morality than that which prevailed in Italy in the closing years of the Middle Ages" (I, 673).

BOOK IV

THE AGE OF DISINTEGRATION

(A.D. 1550–1939)

BOOK IV

THE AGE OF DISINTEGRATION

(A.D. 1550–1939)

THE age of disintegration of the Papal Church coincides with what historians call the Modern Age. It is true that the reasons they give for dating the commencement of the Modern Age or Modern Times in the second half of the sixteenth century are not convincing, but we find the true relation of Papal history to world-history if we recognize that what does most to raise life from a semi-barbaric to a civilized level is freedom to acquire, diffuse, and discuss knowledge. The Papal system was fabricated in a small community, of a low grade of culture, which isolated itself from the life of the city of Rome. It developed its more monstrous pretensions in an age of dense general ignorance. When at length better economic conditions and the proximity of a fine civilization reawakened the mind of Europe, there was a widespread rebellion against the Popes. They resorted to the familiar weapons—repression and bloodshed—of an authority which cannot afford to have its credentials examined, and in three centuries they slew between one and two million rebels and intimidated further millions.

The consciousness of power which the victory gave them encouraged them to become more greedy and more corrupt than ever, and the strain which this laid upon the fretting impatience of Europe coincided with the emergence of new social and political conditions which at last afforded a chance of success to the rebels. Half of Europe threw off the yoke. The Popes then, by the

massacre and persecution of the Huguenots, the Thirty Years' War, and an intensified activity of the Index and the Inquisition, succeeded in retaining the other half, but new conditions—the growing independence of Catholic monarchs and the rapid increase of knowledge and literature—led to the great revolt of the eighteenth century. The Catholic monarchs were persuaded by the violence of the revolutionary movement that they had erred, and in the bloody Papal-royalist reaction that followed half a million martyrs were added to the list. In the second half of the nineteenth century new social and political conditions checked the murderous violence in most countries, and the Popes pretended to accept a regime of free discussion, while relying upon a monstrously untruthful literature and a stern prohibition of the reading of critics to retain their followers. The atmosphere of freedom proved deadly, nevertheless; and by the year 1925 the Papacy contemplated a disintegration as serious as that of the sixteenth century, so it again entered into alliance with brutal coercive forces. When these last allies fall, when freedom is restored from Warsaw to Santiago, the Papacy will pass into the final stage of its devolution.

CHAPTER I

THE MYTHICAL COUNTER-REFORMATION

The historical writers—rarely themselves Europeans—who gratify Catholics by reconstructing the history of Europe pretend that the Reformation was so preponderantly due to social and political changes that we need no longer discuss the Papal and clerical debasement, and that the Popes themselves corrected, without pressure from the Reformers, such disorder as really existed. The procedure is much the same as when they prove that there never was a Dark Age. The thousand ugly facts—I repeat that what I have said about the moral condition of Rome and Italy will be found in such standard authorities as the *Cambridge History*, the Catholic Dr. Pastor, Gregorovius, L. von Ranke, and Burckhardt—are concealed, and the occasional patches of virtue are thus deceptively put out of proportion in the general picture. The fact that there was no serious attempt to reform the Papacy and the Church until, fifty years after the revolt of Luther, half of Europe had seceded, is treated as insignificant; and the more serious fact that when the failure of the Thirty Years' War left this half of Europe definitely irrecoverable, the Papal Church substantially returned to its corruption is suppressed.

We never contended that the Reformation was simply a virtuous revolt against the Papacy. The Europe I have described was not puritanical. Certainly large bodies of good folk in every country deeply resented the obscene farce which the Papal religion had become, and even frivolous folk disdained this uncouth structure of theoretical virtue and almost universal vice, of praise of

poverty and humility yet towering pride and princely luxury; especially since they, the laity, were called upon to pay for it. They had resented it since the twelfth century. The diatribes against the Popes and the Church for their " greed " from 1100 to 1500 would fill a large and piquant volume. The picture of a devout and docile medieval Europe which many offer us is ludicrously unhistorical. Now printing was well developed, and the scholarly criticisms of Erasmus and Lorenzo Valla, the penetrating shafts of Ulrich von Hutten and a score of other writers, and the heavier indictments of evangelical pamphleteers reached a very wide public. The medieval Papacy had become an anachronism.

On the other hand, the writers who would persuade us that new social and political developments were the *cause* of the revolt, not merely the conditions of its success, are not impressive. Dr. L. E. Binns, for instance, professes to do in his *Decline and Fall of the Medieval Papacy* (1934) what Gibbon did for the Roman Empire. But the reader loses his way in a forest of general European history, and he perceives no decline whatever—mainly because the author will not tell the corruption of the Church and resentment of the laity—until he finds himself suddenly on the edge of the precipice. Professor H. S. Lucas claims in *The Renaissance and the Reformation* (1934) that he has discovered that the Renaissance raised economic, political, and cultural problems which a Papacy that had guided men for centuries in an " otherworldly spirit " could not meet. His skill in making new discoveries is amusingly illustrated in his long chapter on Chivalry (ch. IX). He literally accepts the Age of Chivalry and attributes its lofty idealism to the Church and " the refining example of woman." The only authority he quotes is Léon Gautier, a pious Catholic of seventy or eighty years ago; and we saw what even Gautier says about the wild women of the time.

Such is the new history. The one problem which the

Papacy had to face as a result of the Renaissance was the vicious luxury of the Papal Court and the Church. The Popes of the sixteenth century knew nothing about a cultural problem; and the only political problem they saw was the very old problem of intriguing with the various Powers for the recovery of the Papal States and the destruction of rebels. They did not succeed in retaining the southern countries and Poland by adapting themselves to new conditions but by the suppression of critics, a rigorous censorship, a refusal to educate nine-tenths of the people, and a Jesuit education of the remainder that was a tissue of untruth.

The political situation is, as I said, of importance in explaining the success of the revolt, and will be considered in the next chapter. Here it is enough to say that when Luther in 1517 nailed his theses about indulgences to the church-door (a sort of public notice-board) at Wittenberg,[1] Leo XIII treated the news much as if a fly annoyed him at one of his sordid banquets. Three years later Luther issued two pamphlets and burned the Pope's Bull which condemned him. The Emperor got him sentenced and driven into retirement, and the Papacy passed into the gay days of Clement VII: a frivolous prince, of illegitimate birth, of reckless extravagance and nepotism, and of such cynicism in public conduct that he brought upon Rome, we saw, the most terrible of its visitations. But while the Emperor dealt with Clement and pursued his other ambitions in the south, his nine years' absence from Germany permitted the revolt to spread like a fire in a dry forest. And that the chief cause was the degradation of the Church we have

[1] The Catholic who protests that indulgences were not "sold" is amusing. They were sold to any customer—an American Atheist bought me a full set—in Spanish bookshops until 1910, when my exposure of the traffic in England led to changes. A Papal Bull was issued, and proclaimed in the streets of Madrid, every year authorizing the traffic in Spain, and the Vatican drew its commission, which is said to have been ten per cent. on about £500,000 a year, for Spain and Spanish America.

mounds of testimony. The Emperor saw no other cause and pressed for a reform-council. Hadrian VI said:—

> We freely acknowledge that God permits the persecution of the Church on account of the sins of men, especially the prelates and the clergy.[1]

Pius V in a letter to the monks of Germany in 1567 said:—

> The chief cause of the evil is the corrupt morals of the prelates, who, giving the same licence to the clergy under them and corrupting them by their example, not undeservedly brought upon themselves the greatest hatred, contempt, and anger of the laity.[2]

But we shall see plenty of this in the next chapter. We must remember that at this stage the Reformers differed little from Rome in doctrine and laid almost the entire stress upon corruption of morals.

And the Popes, instead of being busy with a counter-reform, opposed the idea of a Council and kept insolently to the primrose path. At the death of Clement the cardinals awarded, or sold, the tiara to the father of four children, the brother of a Pope's mistress, the patron of indecent comedies and gay ladies, a flagrant nepotist and voluptuary, Paul III. He resisted for three years the demand for a reform Council, and then announced that a Council would be held in Italy. This was so futile a proposal that at the opening date in 1538 only five prelates had arrived, and it was abandoned. Rome resumed its gaiety, but at last the Emperor compelled the Pope to convoke a Council at Trent, across the northern frontier of Italy, where the Reformers would be beyond the arm of the Roman Inquisition. But when the Papal Legates arrived, three weeks late, for the opening in 1541, there were no bishops to meet them. The Emperor was furious at the deception—especially as the Pope chose just this time to enrich his granddaughter out of the Papal

[1] Pastor, IX, 134.
[2] Lea, *Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, II, 58. He quotes a number of similar expressions of German prelates.

States—and the German and Spanish envoys at the Vatican, supported by the minority of strict cardinals, used violent language. Paul, however, just removed a few barnacles from the " barque of Peter " and shelved the scheme of reform which the cardinals drafted. Pastor shows from documents in the Vatican Archives that he relied to the end upon his intrigues with the Catholic monarchs to get the rebels and their demand of reform violently suppressed. He secretly offered to allow the Emperor to sell monastic property—on the ground of corruption—to the value of £250,000 if he would attack the rebels and consent to the holding of the Council in Italy. Charles refused.

It was under this pressure that the " great " Council of Trent opened in the last month of 1545, but the hypocrisy of the Vatican was known, and only twenty-five prelates were present. Paul was determined that it should merely formulate doctrine as a standard for the condemnation of heretics.[1] When at length the Emperor found it necessary to attack the Lutheran League, the Pope was outraged because he refused to follow up his victory with drastic persecution. Paul to the end frustrated the design that the Council should discuss the reform of the Church; and when he died, in 1549, the frivolous Papal Court defied the world by electing Julius III, who, we saw, was one of the most scandalous Popes of the century and was widely believed in Rome to be as secretly vicious as he was openly coarse and sensual.

Such, thirty years after Luther's outbreak, was " the reform from within." But with the loss of England, the richest milch-cow of the Papacy, and the growth of the revolt in France the situation had become so serious, financially, that the cardinals, with a sigh, elected a reforming Pope, Paul IV, to succeed Julius. At least Cardinal Caraffa, a fiery Neapolitan puritan, had for

[1] See Pastor's *History* (Vol. IX); A. von Druffel's *Karl V und die Römische Kirche* (1877), and F. Dittrich's *Gaspar Contarini* (1885).

many years fought clerical and monastic vice in South Italy and had founded a religious congregation, the Theatines, for men who wanted an ascetic life without the irresistible temptations of a monastery. But the wealth and power of the Papacy once more poisoned the mind of a religious man. Paul at once effected a few reforms at Rome and appointed a commission to plan a comprehensive reform of the Church. But he soon turned his back upon reform, suspended the sittings of the Council of Trent, and devoted himself to the recovery of the Papal dominion and the enrichment of as sorry a group of relatives as any Pope had ever had. Paul himself was a quaint type of reformer. His love of strong wine and elaborate dinners (sometimes of twenty-five dishes) and his violent temper were the talk of Europe; and his nepotism was shameful. His nephew Carlo, a drunken and dissipated soldier, was made a cardinal and his chief officer. Pastor refutes Ranke's suggestion that Carlo and the other nephews concealed their vices from the Pope. They became at last so intolerable that Paul had to disown them. He died soon afterwards, in mortification and remorse, and he had to be buried secretly, by night, while the Romans took a fierce revenge upon his relatives.

To the dismay of the strict Catholics and the elation of the Protestants, the cardinals then elected a Pope, Pius IV, whose character was so well known that, Pastor says, " the evil elements immediately awakened once more into activity." He was a man of " worldly tendencies " and " little imbued with the ecclesiastical spirit." He was an unblushing nepotist, as Pastor proves against Ranke; and he used the Council of Trent, which he convoked again in 1562, on the lines of the traditional Papal policy of stifling as far as possible the discussion of corruption, which would have opened up a debate on the Papal Court itself, and confining its work to dogma. The Council was, the wits said, " guided by the Holy Ghost,

who was sent there from time to time in a knapsack from Rome." It had the smallest attendance of prelates of any Œcumenical Council, and its discussions were so seasoned with clerical paprika and so hypocritically directed that the full account of it which was afterwards written by the Venetian priest Paolo Sarpi was put on the Index.

Its "reforms" were a mockery. It condemned the sale of indulgences (which, to the great profit of the Popes, continued to be sold) and the duel (which lasted even longer); and it decreed the reform of clerical and monastic morals, which, we shall see, were as bad as ever in the next generation and were never seriously altered. Then the Pope, Pastor says, began to "live according to his inclination." Pastor does not admit that the plot to murder him with poisoned daggers in 1564 was the work of men who resented his neglect of reform, but Ranke quotes impressive contemporary evidence that it was.

Rome was so far from being reformed that one of the most disgusting of the old group of cardinals, Ippolito d'Este—a man who had had the eyes of his brother cut out when his (Ippolito's) mistress admired them—boasted that he won or bought twenty votes at the Conclave which followed the death of Pius IV (1565). But the aspect of Europe was now formidable, and a Dominican monk of stern character, Pius V, was elected and directed to undertake reform. His decrees show that Rome was, fifty years after the outbreak of the revolt, as foul as ever. Monasteries and nunneries were corrupt, and courtesans of the higher type, whom prelates openly visited, still made, in spite of the reduced revenue of the Vatican, incomes which in some cases rose to £20,000 a year.[1] Ordinary prostitution was sordid and superabundant. A nephew of Pius IV who had turned to religion had induced the Governor of Rome to forbid girls of *seven* to sell flowers in the streets, for even at that age they

[1] E. Rodocanachi gives an extraordinary account of this side of Roman life in his *Courtisanes et buffons* (1894).

began the trade, and Pius IV had quashed the regulation. Pius V now drove most of the women from Rome, though he was tearfully implored to see that he would ruin the city, and he enclosed the remnant of common girls in a sort of ghetto. The result, his decrees show, was a growth of worse vices. He forbade bachelors to have female servants: he even forbade nuns to keep male watch-dogs. Adulterers of both sexes were flogged in public. Blasphemers had their tongues pierced with a red-hot iron. Hundreds of heretics were burned alive, as Pastor tells us, and a new palace was built for the Roman Inquisition; which, English Catholics now say, was a very polite institution which never killed anybody.

For six years Rome fumed under this system of compulsory virtue, and the effect was what one would expect. At the death of Pius the cardinals elected a man, Gregory XIII, who had been notoriously immoral, who even now proposed to make a cardinal of his illegitimate son and abolish the restrictions of his predecessor. He was an amiable old man who thought more of promoting culture —he is the Gregory who gives his name to the Gregorian Calendar, though he did no work on it—than of puritanism and, between his personal inclination and the pressure of the Jesuits and zealots, his long pontificate was a feeble compromise. So much freedom was won that we read in Rodocanachi of a courtesan who made a fortune of £150,000 and was the idol of the city. Gregory dare not restore the vast fiscal abuses of the Vatican, and, as he enriched several nephews and had large schemes to finance, he raised money by quite unscrupulous confiscations in Italy. The patent injustice of his exactions led to a wide spread of banditry and violence. How he blessed the St. Bartholomew Massacre we shall see in the next chapter.

The counter-reform of Pius was thus largely undone in thirteen years of considerable laxity, but the scandal of the Popes supporting this regime while they pressed the

kings to crush the Protestants was painful, and in 1585 the cardinals had to admit another reforming Pope, Sixtus V. We must not, it is true, at once infer from the election of an ascetic that the Papal Court was now cleansed. Gregory had hated Sixtus and had relieved him of ecclesiastical office. Yet instead of retiring to a monastery of the Franciscan Order, to which he belonged, he had lived with his sister in a small palace at Rome, and it can hardly be doubted that the cardinals were mistaken about his character.

We have an exhaustive biography of this Pope by the Catholic Baron Hübner (*Sixte Quint*, 2 vols, 1870), and I do not propose to say anything about him which is not stated in that work. It is admitted, for instance, that he indulged heavily in the chronic and most mischievous Papal vice of nepotism. His sister—they were of peasant extraction—became the richest woman in Rome; and, although one of his early decrees ordered that a new cardinal must be at least twenty-one years old, he made a cardinal of and greatly enriched a grand-nephew of the age of thirteen, settled the highest offices upon another, and later married their sisters to nobles.

Baron Hübner's account of his reforms shows us that as late as 1585 Rome was still remarkably corrupt. From the decrees of Sixtus V the Catholic writer extracts this picture of the nunneries (II, 15):—

> There was at the time such licence that the parlours were continually full of idlers, and these conversed all the time with the nuns, diverted them from their vocation, and caused the greatest scandals. As it had happened that young men had violated nuns, and others had, in order to get into convents, broken down the grilles, windows, and doors, Sixtus demanded that they should be punished at once and with extreme rigour.

Two years earlier the President of the French Parlement had opposed the publication of the decrees of the Council of Trent in France on the ground, among others, that the

order to reform clerical and monastic morals had not been carried out in Italy. Graft was still universally practised in the Papal offices, and banditry and murder were so common that in Rome itself nobles had their bands of cut-throats who would rob or murder pedestrians for them and drag women from their homes.

So for five years there was a real, if peculiar, Counter-Reformation: not a change of heart, but a murderous assault upon the vicious and criminal. Thousands were executed for carrying arms, misconduct in nunneries, prostituting their daughters, and so on. The more elegant courtesans were again banished, and the poorer women were drastically restricted. Yet this puritan savagery was balanced by the Pope's own vices. He did much to promote the prosperity of Rome, but, Hübner admits, he sold clerical offices more flagrantly than any Pope had done since Leo X. He mutilated prisoners—an English spy had his tongue cut out and one hand cut off before he was beheaded—his nepotism gave great offence, and his language was as violent as his methods. Catholic writers boast that he protected the Jews. He, says Hübner (I, 349), "protected the Jews in order to exploit them." His foreign policy was, as we should expect, blundering and unscrupulous, his one aim being to drive the Catholic monarchs to exterminate the heretics.

This short spell of puritan fury allied with other vices was the high-water mark of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, which is now represented as a real and permanent improvement of the Church. The Papal pressure relaxed after the death of Sixtus, which was hailed with joy, and only one Pope in the next hundred years pressed for reform; and that not so much from personal desire of it as from a consciousness that the fight against the heretics required it. Except that the Pope and cardinals could no longer live as they had lived in the time of Alexander VI or Leo X, Rome, we shall see, sank

back into its corruption. The next twenty years were mainly spent by the Popes in intrigue with the Catholic Powers to bring about a war upon the Protestants of the North; and the war broke out in 1618 and spread its futile savagery over the next thirty years. We shall return later to the character of the Popes of that period.

CHAPTER II

THE POPES AND THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

EVERY Pope from the time of Leo X onward pressed for the violent destruction of the heretics. The Popes had, we saw, compelled all Christian monarchs to make heresy a lethal crime in their civil codes, and most of them relied upon this to spare them the unpleasant need to reform their luxurious Court and the Church. Of that wise and informed statesmanship with which so many writers endow them they do not at this critical stage, if at any other stage, reveal the least trace. Indeed, the slovenliness of their international organization is amusingly exhibited in the early versions of the famous Index of Forbidden Books. This work grew out of short lists which had been compiled for the use of Inquisitors. With the growth of heresy and the multiplication of printed books in the sixteenth century longer lists were drawn up in various countries, and at length Pope Paul IV ordered his most learned theologians to compile an international list. It was the joke of Germany and England. Our mythical King Arthur appeared in it as the heretical writer Arturus Britannus; and in the next edition this was carefully corrected to (if we translate the Latin) " the Englishman Thomas Arthur." The wizard Merlin kept him company. William of Ockham, a famous Schoolman, was " Ochan." A German *Commentary on Tacitus* was included as heretical, and even a perfectly orthodox book by a Dominican Inquisitor.[1]

It was largely due to this inefficiency as well as the voluptuous insouciance of the Papal Court that Protestantism spread with remarkable rapidity to so many

[1] See my *History and Meaning of the Catholic Index* (1931).

million people. This is easily understood if we do not strain after originality in assigning the causes of the rebellion. Every preacher of revolt against the Popes from the twelfth century onward had had a large following. John Wycliffe, who denounced the Popes as "the most cursed of clippers and purse-kervers," had had hundreds of thousands of adherents in England, and John Hus almost as many in Bohemia. The violent suppression of them gave the Popes very short relief. Before the year 1500, long before the revolt of Luther, lay preachers of the Gospel drew crowds in the streets of London to listen to their attacks upon the priests and monks, whose moral condition was such that it clearly needed only a spark to kindle into flame the disdain of the people. These preacher-critics are mentioned in a discourse of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1486, who admits that the laity "hate the clergy," and that their moral condition is foul.[1] While Catholic writers press upon us the pretentious piece of sophistry in which their Cardinal Gasquet is supposed to have refuted the charge of moral corruption, we have, besides such documents as the above and others which I quoted in the preceding chapter, a collection of cases from the official Registers of the Ecclesiastical Courts of London which authentically disclose a state of clerical and monastic morals, in the half-century before the Reformation, that would be incredible if it were not a court record.[2]

A priest gets a light penance for bawling in church at his parishioners a phrase which I may not even paraphrase here. Another, who was not punished because he swore

[1] In Wilkins's *Concilia Magnæ Britanniæ et Hiberniæ*, III, 618.

[2] Archdeacon Hale's *Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Causes* (1847). Since priests and monks were not tried unless they were denounced to the court, and they were usually acquitted if they just swore that they were innocent, these trials give us no idea of the total number of offenders, but the picture of life which they suggest is enough. For proof of the dishonesty of Gasquet and other Catholic historians, see Dr. G. G. Coulton, *In Defence of the Reformation* (1931) and *Sectarian History* (1937). London, remember, was far smaller than Bedford is to-day.

that he was not guilty, had a woman in his bed every night and walked the streets of London naked. There are several such cases of exhibitionism. Several married couples are sentenced for keeping special brothels for "priests, friars, monks, and canons." Since all these wore distinctive costumes, hundreds would see them visiting their brothels. Other priests are fined for incest or for procuring for priests. A priest tries to rape his servant and to strangle her when she resists. Priests fight each other at the altar or fight laymen in the church; they drink all day with women in their houses; they carouse in the taverns and wear daggers in the streets. Laymen are found in bed with the nuns of the Kilburn Convent, and a priest is convicted of being the father of the child of one of the nuns: which is really serious, so he is fined eight shillings. The convent is found to be a common brothel and is "reformed"; and a few years later a priest is fined three shillings and sixpence for misconduct with the prioress.

This Kilburn convent-brothel was on the main road only a few miles from Westminster. On the eastern main road into London was the famous Benedictine Abbey of St. Albans, with a ring of nunneries. It was the last halt on the journey to London and a busy town. In 1496 the Archbishop of Canterbury complained in a letter to the Abbot (in Wilkins's *Concilia*, III, 632) that the monks "lead a lascivious life and *hesitate not to profane the sacred places, even the temple of God, by fornication with nuns and the shedding of blood and seed.*" The Abbot has made a loose married woman head of a neighbouring nunnery, and he and his monks "notoriously go to fornicate there." In the outlying houses or priories under the Abbot's jurisdiction the monks "prostitute themselves to whores inside and out of the monasteries, almost publicly and continuously." They steal and sell the most sacred ornaments of their churches in order to pay for their dissipations. And twenty years later we find

the archbishop's successor still deploring the debauchery of the monks of St. Albans.

This general condition of the clergy, monks, and nuns, this depravity openly displayed on the high roads into and out of London where thousands passed or halted on a summer's day, was, we saw, denounced by lay preachers in the streets of the city and was known to all. It is, therefore, idle to discuss the lust of Henry VIII and his greed for the wealth of the monasteries. We can understand his anger when, solely out of fear of Spain—as Lord Acton pointed out years ago—the Pope refused him a divorce (or annulment) such as the Papacy had been wont to sell to princes and nobles during four centuries. There is no need to consider how far this and the wealth of the corrupt monks moved him to act; for his action would have been impossible if it had not had behind it a national consciousness that religion had become a mockery under the Papal system. There was far less opposition to Henry's breach with Rome than to Mary's violent attempt to restore its authority. England had never admitted the Inquisition, though it had been compelled by the usual Papal threats to make heresy a lethal crime. In the hundred and fifty years before the accession of Queen Mary, however, we read of only about fifty executions under the law, whereas in her attempt to restore Catholicism " Blood Mary " put to death in three years about three hundred men, women, and youths, and the nation burst into wild rejoicing at the accession of the Protestant Elizabeth. It is not honest to represent, as much of our historical teaching now does, royal lusts and greeds and political developments as substantial causes of the English Reformation. They were just contributory causes of its success.

Lutheranism spread at once to Denmark and Scandinavia, where there was the same corruption of the clergy; and Zwingli, who was more advanced than Luther, prepared the way for Calvin in Switzerland. Holland and

Belgium then belonged to Spain, and the Inquisition had to make vigorous efforts to exclude the new ideas from all three countries. In Spain, however, the chief work of the Inquisition was to detect heresy in the nominally converted Moors and Jews, and Llorente found from its own archives that by the end of the eighteenth century it had put 341,042 to death. Catholic writers make futile attempts to disprove this, and they remind us that, in any case, the Spanish Inquisition was not under the control of the Popes, who rebuked it for its severity. The truth is that Pope Sixtus IV, one of the most truculent of the Popes, supplied the Spanish Inquisition with its rules, and then, when Spain refused to put it under the Vatican, which would have received a third of the handsome profit of its confiscations, found fault with it. Pope after Pope tried to get control, but the Spanish crown preferred to keep the profit itself.

In France Jean Cauvin, now known as Calvin from the Latin form of his name, won so large a following, including the King's pious sister, that at one time Francis I received him with respect. Calvin estimated that there were 300,000 Protestants in the country. But Francis I depended upon his rich Church for large voluntary contributions to his treasury, and the Popes were prompt at all times to exploit the danger of his position between England, Spain, and Germany. Calvin was driven to Switzerland and thousands of Protestants were executed or sent to the galleys. There remained, however, a very large and increasing body of Huguenots, as they came to be called, and some of the most eminent men—the heir to the throne and his sons, Admiral Coligny, etc.—joined them. They were strong enough to meet the royal armies in the field and compel the King and Church to abandon the idea of persecution. As usual, the Catholics turned to fouler means, and in 1572 perpetrated what is known as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

The Jesuits prepared the way for this by pretending

to discover a Huguenot plot to burn the city. It was fantastic, but the Queen-mother, a neurotic Italian who corrupted her son so as to retain power and who is herself suspected of corrupt habits, had no scruples. Seeing that her son leaned to a policy of conciliation and of hostility to Spain, she and her friends concerted the appalling plot. No responsible historian entertains the Catholic plea that it was an unorganized rising of the people. Most of the leading Huguenots had gathered in Paris for the marriage of the King's sister to Henry of Navarre, a Protestant, and at midnight, the commencement of the feast of St. Bartholomew, the church bells rang and soldiers and people rushed to the slaughter. The flames spread to the provinces, and tens of thousands—the respectable estimates vary from 20,000 to 50,000 (which L. von Ranke accepts)—of Protestants, including most of the leaders, perished.

Catholic writers, besides making fatuous attempts to show that there was no organized plot, gravely misrepresent the conduct of the Pope, Gregory XIII. It is acknowledged that, when the news reached Rome, he had the cannon fired from Sant' Angelo and ordered special services of thanksgiving, but Catholic writers say that he had received false information and was grieved when he heard the truth. They omit to state that, as is equally unquestioned in history, he had a gold medal struck with the express inscription that it was in honour of the " massacre [*strages*] of the Huguenots " and a large fresco of it painted. These were not done in a day. The truth is that the savage orgy sent such a shudder through Europe that the French court began to disavow it as a rising of the rabble, and, when the Pope's special Legate arrived with fulsome congratulations, they received him coldly. Had it not been for the massacre, France would have become, like some of the German States, a land of mixed religions with a steady growth of Protestantism. As it was, the Huguenots withdrew to towns in the west

until, in 1685, the Church induced Louis XIV to revoke the Edict of Nantes, their charter of toleration, and drive half a million of the finest workers of France overseas; to the irreparable injury of France and the great profit of England.

In Germany princes and nobles had been easily persuaded by Luther to rebel against the arrogant and avaricious Church, and here the political circumstances, which had in France and Spain helped the Church, favoured the revolt. The Emperor was a foreigner, a Spaniard, and at the critical period he was, as we saw, absent from Germany for nine or ten years. When he returned he found, after a few conflicts, that the rebels were too powerful, and, to the anger of the Popes, he decreed toleration.

Protestantism spread so rapidly that in 1558 the Venetian ambassador declared that it had won nine-tenths of the German Empire, which included Austria. But a new force, the Jesuits, now entered the service of the Papacy. They were from the first regarded with just suspicion, but their peculiar blend of melodrama and unscrupulous cunning disarmed Popes and princes. Their first aim was to ruin Protestantism in Bavaria and Austria, where it was feeblest. They penetrated Bavaria by bribery, and at once inspired heavy persecution; and Ignatius, who had sworn that none of his sons should ever accept an ecclesiastical dignity, allowed one to become Archbishop of Vienna. They intrigued everywhere for the confiscated estates of Protestants, and from their rapidly increasing wealth they built colleges for the sons of nobles and the rich in which the boldest Catholic mendacity pervaded the whole curriculum. No trick was too dishonest, no disguise too ridiculous, for these Black Shirts of the shrinking Church.[1]

The Popes and the Jesuits concluded that, especially

[1] See my *Candid History of the Jesuits* (1913) and F. A. Ridley, *The Jesuits* (1938).

after the recovery of Bavaria and Austria, Catholic Europe was strong enough to drown the heresy in blood, and they awaited a favourable hour. The opportunity might have occurred when, in 1556, Charles V abdicated, leaving Spain and the Netherlands to his son Philip, and Germany and the imperial title to Ferdinand. Had France united with these monarchs the Catholic strength would have been formidable, but the Popes, in their narrow concern for their temporal possessions, fed the mutual hostility of France and Spain, and the Emperor, who would get no aid from Italy—since the fall of the ancient Empire Italian troops have hardly ever fought for any cause outside Italy until Mussolini found weak countries for the display of their valour—would not risk a war. However, in 1618, which counts as the first year of the Thirty Years' War, the hour struck. Ferdinand of Bohemia, soon to become Emperor Ferdinand II, a product of Jesuit education, stung his Protestant subjects into rebellion by his unjust measures.

At this time the reigning Pope was Paul V. After the death of Sixtus V three futile Popes had succeeded each other within a year and a half. Clement VIII, the next Pope, was a vigorous man, but the thirteen years of his pontificate did little to advance the Papal cause. His reign coincides with the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, when the plots of the Jesuits in England served only to make the Queen, who had no mind for persecution on religious grounds, apply to the conspiring Catholics the blood-sodden machinery which the Popes had created four centuries earlier; though Catholic writers now tell their readers that this beastly business of killing for creed was just a temporary outcome of the conflict of passions in Reformation days, and that the priests who conspired in England are saints and martyrs. In Rome graft and simony continued in all the Papal offices. Clement promoted his nephew, Cardinal Aldobrandini, to the highest position, but forbade him to accept the usual

bribes from France or Spain. Put them secretly to my credit in the bank until the Pope dies, the Cardinal told them. This was the Pope under whom the Roman Inquisition committed what the *Cambridge History* calls "one of the most infamous of its acts," the burning of Giordano Bruno, the noblest man and finest scholar of his age in Italy.

The foreign ambassadors reported that Henry IV of France spent £125,000 in bribes during the next Conclave to secure the election of Leo XI, whom Spain opposed. He died within a month. The next Pope, Paul V, was a man of correct conduct—how ironic that one should have to say such a thing about a "Vicar of Christ"—but a nepotist. He compelled the Knights of Malta and the Duke of Savoy to enrich his nephew, and he was an ardent patron of astrologers, as several Popes and cardinals of this period were. The Thirty Years' War now opened, and he heavily subsidized the Catholic armies. His successor, Gregory XV, an enthusiastic supporter of the Jesuits, doubled the subsidy, and he is praised for his patronage of art and learning. Yet Gregory has the invidious distinction of compelling the great pioneer of science, Galileo, to suppress and disown the truth (1615).

Catholic sophistry, indeed mendacity, is on this point particularly audacious. That the Pope was not consulted about this most serious episode of the year is an idle suggestion, and that Galileo wantonly invaded theological territory—he was dragged into it by his monk-opponents—is sheer untruth. But it is even worse to say that the cardinals, including the famous Jesuit Cardinal Bellarmine, whom Catholics now represent as remarkably modern in his ideas, did not condemn the truth as heresy. The two propositions they examined were:—

> The sun is the centre of the world, therefore immovable from its place.
>
> The earth is not the centre of the world and is not immovable, but it moves with a diurnal motion.

The first of these purely scientific truths was condemned as "formally heretical, inasmuch as it directly contradicts the doctrine of Holy Scripture in many passages," and the second was denounced as "at least erroneous in faith." [1] We may grant that Gregory, who was absorbed in enriching himself and his family—in which he was, says the *Cambridge History*, brilliantly successful—and urging the massacre of heretics, did not pay much attention to the mere condemnation of a man of science, and we shall see later how deeply the Papacy was implicated in the second condemnation of Galileo.

The course of the Thirty Years' War, which began by the Jesuits prompting Ferdinand to break his election oath and persecute Protestants, need not be traced here. Bohemia, until then one of the most advanced civilizations of Europe, suffered its first betrayal—its allies in the north were divided—and martyrdom. Its 30,000 villages were reduced to 6000, its 730 cities to 130, its 3,000,000 people to 780,000. But how the victorious advance of Spain and Austria drove France into jealous hostility to them and into alliance with the northern Protestants, and how civilization was put back a hundred years and Spain ruined by the three decades of quite savage fighting, does not concern us here. Armies of nearly every country and race in Europe—Spaniards, French, Slavs, Hungarians, Scandinavians, etc.—wandered over Germany and, in the manner of the Ages of Faith, raped the women everywhere. Indeed, large regiments of women, mainly destitute Germans, followed the troops and settled in the camps. One Catholic army of 34,000 men had 127,000 women and other camp-followers. And in the Year of Science 1939 a monstrous national aspiration is based

[1] The best collection of the original documents is A. Favaro's *Galileo e l'Inquisizione* (1907), but White gives a correct account in his *Warfare of Science with Theology*. The best English work is J. J. Fahie's *Galileo* (1903). G. Forbes's *History of Astronomy* (1909) is altogether wrong about Galileo. See my Little Blue Book, No. 1142, *The Truth About Galileo and Medieval Science* (1926).

upon, and a vast cruelty exercised in the name of, a theory of pure Aryan blood.

The story of the Popes again becomes ironic and disgusting just at this crisis in the fortunes of the Church. With the accession of Urban VIII, whose pontificate covers the greater part of the period of the war, English Protestants had the hilarious experience of seeing the fanatics of Spain and Austria denounce their Pope as an ally of the heretics. Even the modern Catholic writer is compelled to admit that if Urban had sent to the Catholic League the enormous fortune, the property of the Papacy, which he squandered upon his relatives or spent in securing possessions, the Catholics might have triumphed and possibly extinguished Protestantism.

All admit that Urban VIII was the most arrogant and conceited Pope that Rome had yet seen. He consulted nobody and exacted the most servile respect from all. Since the statues of several Popes had been dragged through the mud after their death by the Romans, a law had been passed that no statue must be raised to a Pope during his life. The law, Urban said, could not apply to such a Pope as he was. He refused to continue the annual subsidy which his predecessors had granted to the Emperor, or to send to the Catholic princes any of the vast sum, amounting to several millions, which Sixtus V stored in the vaults of the Castle of Sant' Angelo for such a contingency. While hundreds of thousands of soldiers laboured for the triumph of his Church in Germany, he spent his time and money in fortifying the Papal States, completing the artistic adornment of Rome, and enriching his family.

His greatest fault, says the article on him in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, was his "excessive nepotism." While the fate of his Church in the north hung in the balance, he, as all admit, cultivated this Papal vice more assiduously than any other Pope. He conferred such offices upon and permitted such licence to his brother and three nephews

that the income of their house, the Barberini, rose from 20,000 to 400,000 crowns (a crown was about ten shillings) a year. L. von Ranke, after a careful study, estimated that they made a fortune during his pontificate of 105,000,000 crowns: which is in modern value well over £100,000,000. They emptied the war-treasury in Sant' Angelo and " made enemies on all hands by their rapacity and insolence." They so pillaged the ancient monuments that the Romans said, proverbially: " What the barbarians left undone the Barberini have done." In his later years they dragged the Pope into a war with the Duke of Parma. When the stricken Duke got help from Venice and other Italian States and forced the Pope to make reparation, he was so angry that he fell into a mortal illness. Several times the general resentment of his conduct had induced him to submit his enrichment of his nephews to a committee of theologians, including a Jesuit, and they had obsequiously confirmed his conduct.

But nepotism was *not* his worst fault, and the apologists try desperately, and quite inconsistently, to excuse his alliance with France, which entered the League of the Protestant Powers. Cardinal Richelieu now dominated France and, when the Protestant cause was in danger, induced the brilliant Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden to take the field and turn the scale in their favour. He feared that a triumph of Spain and Austria would injure France; and Richelieu was more of a Frenchman than a Catholic, and at one time threatened to make the French Church independent of Rome.[1] But no excuse can be made for the Pope. He clung to France solely because the alliance was favourable to his own plans and those of his relatives. He followed with interest, some historians say with joy, the victories of the Protestant King.

It is amusing to observe the contortions of apologists when they reach this shameful page in the history of the Papacy. Hayward's *History of the Popes* is, it is true,

[1] See my biography, *The Iron Cardinal* (1909), pp. 339–346.

candid, and severely censures Urban. The author agrees with his Catholic colleague Mourret that from this time "the Papacy began to abandon the guidance of the world." But the *Short History of the Popes* of the Catholic Professors Seppelt and Löffler boldly says that "documents have recently become available" which show that Urban "did not approve the alliance between France and Sweden, but condemned it as soon as he received reliable information regarding its existence, and made every effort to have it annulled" (p. 323). For this flagrant contradiction of what every responsible historian teaches, not a shred of authority is given or any reference to such documents; and the authors have presently to confess that Urban could have turned the war in favour of the Catholic Powers by sending to them Sixtus V's millions! The *Catholic Encyclopædia* does quote a new document, but this merely refutes a story that the Pope shed tears when he heard of the death of Gustavus Adolphus. The writer on Urban in the *Encyclopædia* is content with the ingenuous plea that the Pope was the common father of all the faithful and could not join a league (the Catholic League!) which fought France as well as Sweden.

L. von Ranke quotes in his *Popes of Rome* the official report of the Venetian ambassador, Alvise Contarini, one of the most respected diplomats of the time and one who took part in the negotiations in France. He says:—

> The Pope's Nuncios always favoured Richelieu's undertakings, both when they had for their object his own safety and when they aimed at uniting Bavaria and the League with France. With regard to his alliance with Holland and the Protestant Powers generally, they held their peace, that it might not be said that they sanctioned it. Other Popes would, perhaps, have had this connivance upon their conscience, but the Nuncios of Urban VIII found this the road to greater consideration and to personal advancement.[1]

[1] Vol. II, p. 396. The full Italian text is given in the Appendix (Vol. III).

Even more damaging to the Papacy is the account in the *Cambridge Modern History* (IV). The Emperor, the writer says, was to be weakened before the Swedes attacked, and this " Richelieu and the Pope understood to bring about with masterly skill " (as the Venetian ambassador describes). Urban defied the protests of the German and Spanish ambassadors, and in a public speech to the Romans he said that Gustavus Adolphus was " rendering to Christian Rome services like those of Camillus to the pagan city " (p. 68). The Pope changed his policy only after the death of Gustavus Adolphus, probably from fear that Spain might now win, but it was too late to avert the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which left Protestantism in possession of the north.

It was this scandalous Pope who directed the second condemnation of Galileo, who, in the caustic attack which he made upon his critics in his *Dialogues* (1632), was generally understood to belittle the conceited Pope. The documents published by Favaro make an end of the Catholic claim that the Pope was not involved—he angrily directed the persecution—or that Galileo was " treated with consideration." When he replied to the summons to Rome that he was ill, as he was, he was harshly told that the Pope would send an official to see if he was shamming and that if this were true he would be brought to Rome " bound and in irons." At Rome he was kept in suspense for several months. Catholic writers glibly say that the charge of dungeons and torture has been disproved, but the documents show that we cannot trace where he was from June 21 to 24, and they refer to threats of torture. His promise to recant probably saved him from actual torture, but the recantation must have been torture enough. It runs, to quote the essential words:—

> I, Galileo Galilei, being in my seventieth year, a prisoner on my knees before your Eminences . . . abjure, curse, and detest the said errors and heresies [of the movement of the earth and the stationary sun].

And the one Catholic scientist (medical professor) of whom the richest (American) branch of the Church can boast, Dr. J. J. Walsh, tells his readers in his *Popes and Science* that Galileo's life was " the most serene and enviable in the history of science." The works of Galileo and Copernicus and " all other works teaching the same " remained on the Index until 1835, and the prohibition to read them was enforced as late as 1822.

CHAPTER III

THE STATE OF CATHOLIC COUNTRIES

THE scandalous pontificate of Urban VIII, which lasted twenty-one years, makes a mockery alike of the claim, which so many historians lightly endorse, that the Popes had reformed their Court and Church and the even more widely accepted legend of the serene wisdom and statesmanship of the Vatican. How cultivated men and women, or even ordinarily educated folk, can continue in our time to speak of a divinely-guided " Holy Church " and a series of Holy Fathers and Vicars of Christ we should find it difficult to explain if we did not know the unscrupulous nature of Catholic literature and the way in which priests slander all critics of their Church and prevent their people from reading the truth. Even the educated Catholic imagines that the only historical objection to his conception of his Church and its leaders is that there were in remote days " a few bad Popes "; and he somehow persuades himself that the Holy Ghost could direct the election of these vicious or dishonourable men and in some sense " dwell " in them, content only to see that they taught no heresy. It is fantastic and pathetic. Such Popes as Urban VIII, a century after the beginning of the Reformation, did far more harm to the Church than the adulterers, sodomists, and murderers of earlier years. Yet such was still the corruption of Rome at the middle of the seventeenth century that Urban's successor was an even more wanton nepotist than he, and the Papal offices, the city, and the States of the Church remained foul with graft, simony, and injustice.

Since there were in the Conclave which followed the

death of Urban in 1644 no less than forty-eight cardinals of his own creation, his nephews boasted that the wealth he had showered upon them was safe. They could not secure the office for their favourite, but at least the new Pope, Innocent X, owed his hat to their uncle. What passed between them in the Conclave we, of course, do not know; but they were outraged when Innocent's first act was to turn upon them and demand the Papal treasure. They fled to France, and Innocent publicly deplored the nepotism by which his predecessor had brought shame and ruin upon the Church. When, a few years later, the Catholic princes were, largely on account of Urban's conduct, compelled to sign the inglorious Peace of Westphalia, Innocent austerely complained that they were " intent upon their own interests rather than upon those of God." " Unfortunately," says the Catholic Hayward, " the prestige of the Holy See had sunk so low at this time that nobody took any notice of him." A thorough and genuine counter-reform was needed to restore that prestige, yet Innocent entered upon a career of nepotism and simony that was even more scandalous than that of his predecessor.

There are Catholic writers who deny that Innocent indulged in the classic Papal vice of nepotism. It is a good sample of their work. Nepotism means, literally, a promotion of nephews (*nepotes*), whereas it was chiefly upon his sister-in-law Olimpia that the Pope conferred his favours. She had, in marrying the Pope's brother, brought considerable wealth into the family, and Innocent owed much of his own advancement to this. He now permitted her to add enormously to her fortune by so gross a practice of simony that it was known all over Europe. All ecclesiastical appointments were made through her, and she exacted a monthly payment or pension from every bishop, abbot, or priest who received such appointment. Just at the time when Protestant literature most heavily reviled the Papacy it tolerated or encouraged one of the

gravest scandals since the Reign of the Whores. Olimpia built a magnificent palace, and queues of office-seekers and the carriages of the leading cardinals and ambassadors beset it. Her daughters married into the richest and most aristocratic families of Rome. Such was her reputation that in Paris it was generally believed that she had 150 rich men poisoned to get their wealth.

But Innocent X was a nepotist also in the strict sense, and the scandal grew to outrageous proportions. Olimpia had one son, Camillo. He had little ability, and had therefore been put into the Church. But in the golden prospect which opened out at the accession of her brother-in-law, Olimpia withdrew him from the seminary and married him to the wealthiest heiress in Rome. To the delight of Rome, Camillo's wife despised Olimpia and made a spirited fight against the virago. Olimpia then selected a young adventurer, thrust him upon the Pope's notice, and secured his adoption as "nephew." He lived in Innocent's palace and exercised a considerable influence over him. But he refused, once he was established, to share the spoils with Olimpia, and the quarrel became public, vulgar, and complicated. The amusement of Rome increased when the Pope, discovering that his chief secretary had for years duped and exploited him by affixing a false summary to every document he presented for signature—the Pope never read the documents—dismissed him and put in his place the man who had committed the forgeries.

Money oozed out at every pore of the Papal system. In 1652 Innocent suppressed and confiscated the property of a number of Roman monasteries and nunneries which still were, his Bull tells us, hotbeds of vice. Such was the Papal system seventy years after the death of Sixtus V, and under the eyes of the Pope. And Innocent, whose love of justice is reverently extolled by Catholic writers, presided over this sordid system for eleven years; and when he died, in 1655, the relatives he had enriched

refused to spend a ducat on his remains. His body lay neglected by all for three days, and a poor canon whom he had dismissed from office then paid a few shillings to get cheap attention for it. The cardinals were too busy with the Conclave. " Now we'll choose an honest man," they are reported to have said. So the " squadrons," as Rome called the factions of cardinal voters, engaged in the usual skirmishes, and they elected a man who had criticized the abuses which, Ranke says, " had never been more flagrant than of late." Yet they must have known the man they chose: an indolent, comfortable man, more disposed for rural quiet and a book of profane poems than for the kind of fight which a reformer would have to wage. Soon nepotism flourished as verdantly as ever.

Alexander VII ignored for a whole year the hungry looks of the relatives who lingered in Siena, while cardinals, who found it easier to approach a Pope through his family, tactfully blamed him. He laid the matter very solemnly before the head of the Jesuit College and later General of the Society, Father Oliva, and the astute priest as solemnly told him that it was a sin to keep his relatives away from Rome. They came in droves. The Pope made his brother, Don Mario, Governor of the Borgo, or the part of the city round St. Peter's, which was, we shall see, sodden with corruption. A nephew became what Rome was accustomed to call " the Cardinal Nephew," and his slender income rose to £50,000 a year. Another nephew got the best lay appointments, and more distant relatives shared the golden shower. Rome was again a prosperous city of 120,000 inhabitants and opulent palaces; though when the Venetians asked the Pope for a subsidy in their defence against the Turks, he told them to raise money by suppressing some of their corrupt monasteries and nunneries.

We are assured that the next Pope, Clement IX, was really virtuous. It is true that his relatives were not enriched out of ecclesiastical funds—he was content to

arrange good marriages for them—and, though the large sums which he distributed amongst the cardinals were said by evil folk to be the price of his election, we have no proof or very firm evidence of this. But Clement's virtue was not the rugged and austere type that was needed. He was a quiet and amiable man who did not like the stink of cleaning a stable, and he knew well that the reform of this "reformed" Church would raise a prodigious stink. We have a letter in which Cardinal Sachetti, one of the zealots, calls his attention to the vile condition of the city and the Church; the appalling exploitation of the poor, the complete corruption of the law-courts, the burden of the taxes and cruelty of the collectors, the scandal of the traffic in ecclesiastical offices, and so on.[1] Clement wearily made a few alterations, but he dare not boldly attack the monstrous parasitism of the higher clergy and the Papal officials. Instead, he raised further loans, and before he died the public debt of the Papacy amounted to 52,000,000 crowns—a crown was worth to the Roman what a pound is to us—on which interest (which the Church officially condemned as usury) had to be paid. Rome was approaching bankruptcy. Yet when Clement died, in a little over two years, the cardinals, reaching a deadlock in their war of ambitions, elected an old man of eighty, Clement X, who, having no relatives, adopted a "nephew" to do the work while he went on with his game of whist and found 300,000 crowns for the building of a family palace.

Here ends the learned and most useful work (*The Popes of Rome*) of L. von Ranke, which is based upon such a mass of hitherto unpublished documents, in Italian and Latin, that they occupy nearly the whole of his third volume. It is amusing to find Catholic writers who do not know what research means tilting at the erudite German historian. Before he quits the field, however, he gives us a long account of the state of the Church, the

[1] In Arckenholtz's *Mémoires*, IV, Appendix No. XXXII.

city, and the Papal States; and this is fully confirmed by the letter of Cardinal Sachetti to which I have referred and other documents which Ranke reproduces. One document he quotes is an unpublished catalogue, the manuscript of which is in Vienna, of abuses in the administration of justice which was written for the Pope by an official who had practised for twenty-eight years in the Roman courts. The vacation of the judges and officials lasted four months, and " during the remainder of the year the members of the court led a life of dissipation and excitement " (III, 83). Rich Romans paid for crooked decisions, and every judge received large gifts of money at Christmas. " The administration of the law," says the historian, " must have been utterly perverted and corrupt," and " these evils extended from the highest court of law to the inferior ones and to the civil and judicial administration of the provinces."

This universal graft in the civil and judicial systems was inspired by the equally universal graft—in this case we should say simony—of the Papal Curia. A pension for some ecclesiastic or Papal official was attached to every appointment: every bishopric, abbey, and even common benefice (priest's income). The morality of this is on just the same level as the periodical fee for " protection " levied by racketeers in America, yet the system was quite open and familiar to everybody. The burden on the bishoprics, in particular, was so heavy that only rich men could accept some of them, and the scrutiny of the character of candidates could not be exacting. A case is recorded of a bishop who, after paying all dues, had less than £50 a year for himself. The office was frequently refused by good but poor men. In 1667 twenty-eight Neapolitan bishops and archbishops were deposed because they no longer paid the pensions to Rome. Business men from Venice and Genoa bought the appointments in Rome for lump sums and proceeded to wring the money out of the priests and people. In Spain as well as Italy

these Roman pensions were levied even upon the benefices of the lower clergy, and " the least evil that could result from such a system was the entire corruption of the parochial clergy and the utter neglect of their flocks." Hundreds of small monasteries and nunneries were suppressed, on the usual charge of vice, and monks were rarely seen in the new Rome, " where nothing but scorn and insults awaited them."

Historical writers of the new school who tell their readers that the Roman Church purified itself by a Counter-Reformation do as much violence to the facts as when they represent the monks of the Middle Ages as a generally virtuous and industrious body of men, the Age of Chivalry as a beautifully romantic period, the people of Europe as docile and devoted to the Church, and the Popes as effective guardians of justice and morals. The only change was one which was inevitable now that the Papacy had twenty million Protestant critics free and eager to discuss its life. The scandal of an Alexander VI, a Leo X, or a Julius III could not occur again, and the parade of sexual licence and heavy gambling of their prominent cardinals was equally impossible; though we shall find cardinals occasionally maintaining mistresses, with little or no concealment, to the end of the nineteenth century. Mussolini, in what the Church would call his unregenerate days, wrote a novel about one of them.

Whether the story of Donna Olimpia or of the vast fortune of the Barberini is much more edifying the reader may judge, but there was no other serious change of the system. Simony was, we saw, a fully organized business. Graft was universal. Violence was almost as unchecked as ever. In the Papal States, apart from Rome, a thousand murders were committed every year, and banditry was worse than in any other civilized country. As we shall find all these things unaltered in the first half of the nineteenth century, when we have an exact knowledge of them, we need not hesitate to accept the more casual

references to the condition of the Papal States in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It will hardly be claimed that they fell into corruption from a state of grace just after the purge of the French Revolution and Napoleon had passed through Italy. But the state of Rome and the Papal Court, which I have described, is proof enough of the general degradation.

Since this is not a history of the Roman Church but of the Popes, I have said little about the moral condition of the countries which were subject to the Pope. The theme cannot, it is true, be ignored here, because the primary interest of the history of the Popes to our social-minded age is whether they did in fact exert that beneficent influence upon Europe which it is now customary to grant them. I have, therefore, shown that justice and virtue were almost unknown in the centuries when the Popes had supreme power in Europe, and it is now necessary to make a short survey of Catholic lands in order to see if there is any reality whatever in the alleged Counter-Reformation. And, since Catholics regard sexual morality as the peculiar concern of their Church and chief test of character, it will be enough to consider this.

It ought not to be necessary to make such an inquiry. Down to our own time the so-called Latin countries were so notorious for sexual freedom that Catholics foolishly pleaded in excuse the " hot blood " of the southerner; as if sexual conduct was superior in Tsarist St. Petersburg or imperialist Berlin to what is was in Naples or Madrid! The vice and violence of Catholic countries were simply survivals in the nineteenth century, like the illiteracy and general inefficiency, of medieval conditions: the most solid proof that, whatever the Popes did, they did not effectively inculcate virtue, justice, and self-control. For Italy we might be content with what we saw about Rome and the Papal States, but there is special evidence about the condition of Tuscany.

The later Medici and their successors, the Grand

Dukes of Tuscany, had been degenerate and generally stupid princes who had permitted that once-glorious part of Italy, of which Florence was the centre, to sink into the same decay and ignorance as all other parts of Papal Southern Europe. It must not be supposed that some of the scepticism of Renaissance days lingered there and impeded the action of the Church. "No State had been so priest-ridden," says the *Cambridge Modern History*, and "it was sunk in ignorance and superstition, for the Inquisition and the moral espionage of the friars had crushed its ancient intellectual qualities." The Duchy passed in the second half of the eighteenth century to Leopold of Austria, and, although he was himself "almost indecently false and immoral" (a contemporary said), he permitted his ministers to carry out extensive reforms. The reform of the clergy and monks he entrusted to Bishop Ricci of Pistoia, a man of strict life, and an appalling description is given in the Bishop's *Memoirs* (English translation, 1829).

"For a century and a half before this," Ricci says, "the total corruption of the Dominican order had been a matter of scandal throughout Tuscany": so that it is not a question of a lapse after a reform, or of a temporary or local scandal that might be unknown at Rome. The Dominican monks controlled the nunneries of the Duchy and indulged in "the basest profligacy." In some convents two monks slept every night in the open dormitory with the nuns, who were wholly corrupted. They told Bishop Ricci, when he would reform them, to mind his own business, because they were, they said, subject to the monks, not the Pope; and the Papal Nuncio at Florence, who used to dine in the convents and enjoy the gay comedies and masked balls which the nuns gave, supported them and their monk-paramours. When evidence was forced upon the Vatican that every nunnery was in effect a brothel, the General of the Dominican Order, who "attended every week a dinner-party of

infidels and libertines," induced the Pope to condemn Ricci (1781), and it was only the threats of the Grand Duke that got him freedom to reform. Monks and nuns of other orders were little better. Catholic writers boast of the merciful Right of Asylum (Shelter) by which in the Middle Ages a hunted man had protection in a church or monastery. Ricci shows that in Italy in the eighteenth century this led to colonies of criminals living with prostitutes in the churches and monasteries, the monks " using them as instruments of the frauds which they were desirous of executing."

Every part of Italy was just as foul. Naples, which had one priest to seventy-six people, and Venice, which had one priest to every fifty people, were as notorious—Naples still is—for the practice of unnatural vice as for the licence of the priests, monks, and nuns. Of France, the classic land of royal, aristocratic, and episcopal vice, it is hardly necessary to speak. Cardinals and Archbishops were as free as dukes. Even the famous Bishop Bossuet had what he called a " wife " and children in secret.[1] A cleric, the Abbé Dubois, who was the most corrupt figure in what is probably the most corrupt period in history, the Regency, was made a cardinal by the Pope; and the Pope knew his vices so well that he fell seriously ill from shame of his act. Harlay de Champvallon, Archbishop of Paris and head of the French Church, had four mistresses of noble rank. The Cardinal de Retz, the Cardinal de Bouillon, Cardinal de Guise . . . But the state of the clergy, higher and lower, until the outbreak of the Revolution is notorious, and the most amazing excesses are recorded. How the monks and the laity lived, with such encouragement, need not be told. And

[1] See the evidence and a large amount of other information in F. Chavard, *Le célibat, le prêtre, et la femme* (1894). Compare Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, *The Cambridge Modern History* (" the most flagrant sins and the most notorious sinners existed without disguise "), or any authoritative French historian (Martin, Michelet, De Tocqueville, Lavisse, etc.).

the Papacy fiercely persecuted, for a shade of incorrectness in doctrine, the one body of Puritans in France, the Jansenists.

All this is known; but there are many who fancy that the clergy and monks were better-behaved in Spain. There is no ground for the belief. There is hardly a parallel in history to the degeneration, without external influence, of Spain—economically, intellectually, and morally—under its strictly Catholic regime after the year 1600. A characteristic vice in Spain was the seduction of young women in the confessional, and Lea shows that in 3775 cases of such seduction in the records of the Inquisition, which merely judged cases that were denounced to it, 981 offenders were secular priests and 2794 friars. In short, we may quote from Professor Chapman's *History of Spain* (p. 282) this picture of the condition of Spain at this period drawn by Professor Altamira:—

> . . . the most abominable of nefarious sins [sodomy] scattered to an almost unbelievable extent among all classes of Madrid society . . . the very fewness of the number of the virtuous stands out the more strongly from the general stock of that society, as accustomed to laziness, hypocrisy, routine, and external practices as it was removed from the true paths of virtue, wisdom, and progress.

The situation was the same in Portugal, and it was worse in Spanish America, but I must refer to other works of mine (*The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church*, *History of Morals*, etc.) for details. No picture of ingenuous and unblushing immorality in any literature can surpass the account of the life of the South American priests and monks in *Noticias secretas de America*, a report of two Spanish scientists of the eighteenth century, published in London in 1826.

This moral condition of Catholic countries remained the same until the French Revolution, and it was, we shall see, substantially restored after the fall of Napoleon. Just in those countries the vice and violence of the Middle

Ages survived most vigorously. Although Rome was in constant and intimate communication with every part of this Catholic world, Pope after Pope tolerated its depravity. It is almost just to say, in fact, that the only Pope in these two centuries of sufficient ability to win the respect of Europe, Benedict XIV, was also known throughout Europe for his love of Rabelaisian stories and conversation. We may, therefore, dismiss briefly the successors of Clement X until the accession of Benedict XIV.

Innocent XI (1676–1689) is officially described as a gentle, humble, virtuous man who avoided nepotism and effected many reforms of the ecclesiastical system. As the deficit of the Papal Budget now rose to 170,000 ducats a year on a total revenue of 2,500,000, reform was urgently needed; and none will question the genuineness of his desire to improve the Church. But the fatal hereditary concern of the Popes about their temporal possessions caused him to begin a disastrous struggle with France. While sexual licence in France grew bolder from one reign to another, and scepticism spread rapidly in Paris, the Pope entered upon an acrid struggle with Louis XIV about the extent of Papal jurisdiction over his clergy, and this caused the French clergy, led by Bishop Bossuet, to draw up the famous charter of the Liberties of the Gallican Church (1681). To the great anger of Rome, they declared that a Pope had no jurisdiction over Kings and was himself subject to a General Council of the Church; and that differences about doctrine must be settled by bishops and Pope acting together. To sustain this grave conflict the cardinals at the next Conclave elected a man of eighty-nine, and he condemned the Gallican Declaration. But he did not impress the French. The *Catholic Encyclopædia* praises his virtue and generosity, but adds that " the same generous nature led him to bestow upon his relatives the riches they were eager to accumulate, and in their behalf and to the discredit of his pontificate

he revived sinecure offices which had been suppressed by his predecessor."

So in two years Alexander VIII contrived to undo the reform of Innocent XI; and his successor, Innocent XII, who deserves honourable mention for charitable and educational (religious) foundations in Rome, nevertheless blundered into a policy which brought a new war upon Europe and strengthened the growing determination of the Catholic monarchs to conduct their national and international affairs without Papal interference. Charles II of Spain had no heirs to his faded throne, and, as he neared the end of his wretched career, the leading Powers agreed that the Archduke Charles of Austria should succeed him. But in pursuance of the new policy of conciliating France the Pope got the Archbishop of Toledo to work upon the superstitious mind of the dying King and induce him to leave his throne to the grandson of Louis XIV. Innocent escaped the consequences by dying before Charles, and Cardinal Albani, who had encouraged him, was elected and became Clement XI. Charles died during the Conclave, but the terms of his will were concealed at Rome, or Albani would never have been Pope.

Clement, said King Victor Amadeo, "would always have been esteemed worthy of the Papacy if he had never obtained it"; and the *Cambridge History* observes that this might justly be said of all the Popes of this period, so we may dismiss them with few words. It is true that the long pontificate of Clement XI (1700–1721), who was a man of austere life and genuine desire of reform, was crowded with events; but the Pope's personal share was one of such blunders that in the end the Catholic monarchs ignored him. He had, we saw, inspired the plot of securing the crown of Spain by a secret will to a French prince, and he supported the coronation of this man as Philip V, the founder of the corrupt line of the Spanish Bourbons. This led to the twelve-year War of the Spanish Succession,

in the course of which the Austrians invaded Italy and compelled the Pope to submit; which in turn angered the French, and at the settlement by the Peace of Utrecht (1713) the Pope's claims were disdainfully ignored by all parties. In spite of his threats, Sicily was awarded to Victor Amadeo of Savoy, and Parma and Piacenza to a Spanish prince. Clement deeply offended strict Catholics in all countries by issuing the Bull *Unigenitus* against the Jansenists (Puritans) of France to please the royal sinner and his lax Jesuit advisers; and he incurred contempt throughout Europe when, on the archaic plea that it was the Pope's business to accord royal titles, he solemnly rebuked the Protestant Elector of Brandenburg for taking the title of King of Prussia and maintained in royal state at Rome the pretender to the English throne, James III.

Thus thirty years of " good Popes " had merely lowered still further the prestige of the Papacy, and the disdain of Europe deepened when the cardinals fought more violent and protracted quarrels than ever at the next three Conclaves, yet elected futile old men. Innocent XIII was, says even the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, " weak enough to yield to French pressure and raise the unworthy Prime Minister Dubois to the cardinalate." Dubois was the most infamous cleric in the foulest period of French history. He died two years later " of hard work and the wildest debauchery "; and Pope Innocent soon followed him, dying, it is said, of shame and remorse. His successor, Benedict XIII, scandalized Europe and infuriated Rome by leaving everything to his corrupt favourite Cardinal Coscia. The *Catholic Encyclopædia* describes him as " saintly "—" very pious, very weak, and very stupid " is the verdict of the shrewd President de Brosses—and suggests that he knew nothing of the crimes and vices of Coscia. But they were so notorious that at the Pope's death the Romans cried, " Now let's go and burn Coscia," and so serious that the next Pope, Clement XII, condemned him to ten years in prison and

a fine of 100,000 ducats. Clement was seventy-nine years old, though the Conclave had lasted four stormy months, and was in the hands of relatives who enriched themselves. He restored the public lottery and made half a million a year from it, out of which, we will admit, he made many improvements in Rome. In short, it was not until near the middle of the century that the " reformed " Church got a Pope whom Europe respected, and by that time even the Catholic half of it had passed into so grave a condition that the next half-century would see the Pope compelled to suppress the Jesuits and to shudder before the fury of the French Revolution.

CHAPTER IV

THE POPES AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE Catholic version of the momentous half-century which, although one-third of the period fell under the rule of the ablest Pope in three centuries, followed the death of Clement XII has that spurious air of ingenuousness which so often amuses the reader. It explains that Protestantism had destroyed the chaste discipline of the Age of Faith and Chivalry, and had thus permitted a dark flood of infidelity to pour over Europe. In the eighteenth century, it continues, monarchs and statesmen who were tainted by this infidelity compelled the Pope to suppress, while tearfully protesting their innocence, those stern and gallant guardians of the Christian conscience, the Jesuits, and this led inexorably to the horrors of the French Revolution. We have not here to consider whether Protestantism, in diverting men's minds from the forged credentials and moral futility of the Popes to the Bible, prepared the way for Deism; but it is a sheer untruth to say that the Pope who suppressed the Jesuits declared them to be innocent, and it is nonsense to connect that suppression with the French Revolution. The works of Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Encyclopædists circulated throughout France before the Jesuits were expelled from that country.

In 1740, when the Conclave met, Rome was, as usual, blind to the significance and portent of the historical development. The Protestant Powers—England, Holland, and Prussia—were rising to supremacy, and Russia was slowly moving toward them. Strictly Catholic countries like Spain, Portugal, Central Italy, and Spanish

America were, on the contrary, sinking to their lowest economic, intellectual, and social level. France and Austria were still great, but both countries rejected the pretensions of the Papacy as no Catholic land had ever done before, and in France there was a very wide spread of scepticism. Italy itself ought to have conveyed a warning to any ecclesiastical statesman. Liberalism and reform made progress in the north and south, which opposed the Popes, but Central Italy, under the Popes, was beggared—economically and intellectually—and despised. " There is a disdain of the Holy See all over the world," Benedict XIV would presently say.

Cardinal Lambertini, as he was before his election, was the only prelate with some appreciation of the situation, yet neither he nor any other dreamed of his becoming Pope. He is said to have been correct in conduct and zealous in the performance of his ecclesiastical duties, but he was more than frivolous in speech and taste. President de Brosses, the distinguished French statesman, visited him in 1739, and admiringly wrote his friends that the cardinal had told him " some good stories about girls " and had greatly enjoyed stories about the debauchery of Cardinal Dubois and the French court.[1] He went to the opera three times a week, and, pleading that fish did not agree with him, ate meat on fast-days. The strict cardinals frowned upon him, and he retaliated by calling them " oxen from the stable " of his stupid predecessors. The Conclave, however, was drawn out during six acrid, sweltering months, and in the final exhaustion the Powers which did not want a rigorous Pope secured his election. Europe, at a time when scepticism was spreading rapidly, got a Pope who corresponded amiably with Voltaire (who dedicated his *Mahomet* to him) and was greatly esteemed

[1] *Lettres familières* (1858), I, 250. He repeatedly describes Lambertini as " indecent " and " licentious " in conversation. He relates (II, 439) that before the Conclave the cardinal said, jokingly, " If you want a good *coglione*, elect me." The Italian word is very gross.

by Deists like Pitt, Horace Walpole, and Frederic the Great.

But Benedict's little vices did not include indolence. His Bulls, letters, and a few small works fill seventeen volumes and cover the entire Catholic world. He soon announced his policy, " I prefer to let the thunders of the Vatican rest," and said that he was more anxious to have the friendship of princes than of prelates. With France he made peace by granting that his predecessor's Bull against the Jansenists need not be rigorously enforced. When the Jesuits, the lax confessors of half the sinners of Paris, pressed him to see the importance of strict orthodoxy, he said that it was now not so much a question in France whether people believed correctly, but whether they believed at all. Spain he conciliated in spite of an angry clamour around him in Rome. The Spaniards deeply resented that the Vatican made all appointments to benefices and took toll thereon during eight months of the year. Benedict—let us say frankly—sold the right to Spain for a lump sum of 1,143,330 crowns. He was not particularly sensitive about such ecclesiastical abuses, nor was he the man to attack the universal immorality. He made similar compromises with Portugal, Sardinia, and Naples, and he was careful not to exacerbate the growing hostility to the Papacy among the Catholics of Austria.

His reputation among non-Catholic scholars rested upon his attempt to raise the intellectual and artistic level of Rome as well as upon his personal liberality. The desperate finances of the Vatican and the city he entrusted to Cardinal Valenti, a shrewd administrator of dissolute morals, and there was a remarkable improvement. The economic ideas of the clerics were appalling. Two cardinals, Benedict wrote to his friend Cardinal Tencin, sold immunity from fiscal burdens to 4000 traders. Many abuses were now suppressed, and out of his new resources the Pope restored public buildings, founded

academies, and added science to the curriculum of the University. When, however, he tried to purge Church literature at least of the grosser legends which lingered in it, he met bitter opposition from the clergy, and his best work was shelved. In his later years he turned to the problem of the Jesuits, whose dishonest practices in the Far East and in South America he—without mentioning the word Jesuits—condemned in several Bulls. He obviously feared them. A month before he died he commissioned Cardinal Saldanha to report to him on the grave charges against them in Portugal, but he did not live to see the scorching indictment which resulted.

His unhappy successor, Clement XIII (1758–1769), inherited the struggle against the Jesuits, which now flared up in every Catholic country, but he had been elected by Jesuit influence, and he spent his eleven years in a futile attempt to protect them. They had been expelled from Portugal in the year of his accession, and they were next expelled from France (1764) and Spain (1769).[1] The Pope vainly protested, declaring in a Bull that he "had certain knowledge that the Society of Jesus exhibits in the highest degree the spirit of sanctity and piety." Catholic Europe laughed at its simple-minded Pope, and the expulsions continued under his successor Clement XIV, who, elected after a long and passionate struggle in Conclave, was accused by the Jesuits of having been bribed to suppress them. The fact is that he wavered timidly for four years, during which, says the *Cambridge Modern History*, "the violence and duplicity of the Jesuits alienated their own friends." When the last Catholic monarch, Maria Theresa, turned against them, the Pope in the famous Brief *Dominus ac Redemptor Noster* declared the Society "for ever abolished." He died a year later, and even the *Cambridge History* thinks it "possible that he was poisoned by the Jesuits."

[1] For details and proof of the charges against them see my *Candid History of the Jesuits*, 1913, ch. XIII.

Catholic writers almost invariably say that the Pope passed no opinion upon the charges and merely suppressed the Society for the sake of peace. Even the pretentious *Catholic Encyclopædia* says:—

> The one and only motive for the suppression of the Society set forth in this Brief is to restore the peace of the Church by removing one of the contending parties from the battlefield. No blame is laid by the Pope on the rules of the order, or the personal conduct of its members, or the orthodoxy of their teaching.

If this were true, it would be the only instance in history of the Popes ending a struggle between secular and spiritual powers by suppressing the latter. But the statement is, since the writer unquestionably had the Brief before him, one of the very many in Catholic literature which we are compelled to call mendacious.

For the Pope enumerates and expressly endorses all the charges against the Society. He observes " with the bitterest grief " that all the efforts of his predecessors to correct them were without avail. These relate to " secular affairs with which the Society ought not to concern itself "—their vast commercial enterprises—to " grave dissensions and quarrels harshly provoked by its members," to their " interpretation and practice of certain pagan ceremonies," and to " the use and interpretation of those maxims which the Holy See has justly proscribed as scandalous and evidently injurious to good morals." He says that " the Society almost from the beginning produced within it the germs of discord and jealousy." He tells that he has had a full inquiry made into the " thousand complaints against it," and he pronounces it abolished because " it can no longer produce the rich fruits and utilities for which it was instituted." This indictment of the Society runs to several pages, yet every Catholic historian repeats that the Pope did not find the Jesuits guilty.[1]

[1] They take advantage of the fact that it is now difficult to consult

The Catholic statement that the Jesuits were merely sacrificed for the sake of peace is as maladroit as it is false, for Clement's successor Pius VI (1775–1799) had more acrid relations than ever with the Catholic rulers. The kind of Catholic Modernism which (called Gallicanism in France, Febronianism in Austria, etc.) challenged the Papal authority at this time spread over Austria and South Germany, North Italy, and the Kingdom of the Sicilies. Joseph II of Austria, one of the most powerful and most enlightened monarchs of the age—it is often observed that he did ten times as much for civilization as any Pope—resisted the Pope even when he visited Vienna, and he threatened to separate his Church entirely from the Vatican, as Richelieu had threatened. Joseph's brother was the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who, as I described in the preceding chapter, carried out, in spite of Rome, very necessary reforms in his duchy. In the province of Venice and the kingdoms of Sardinia and Sicily the same ideas were widely accepted, and there was very serious friction with the Vatican. South Italy and Sicily were at this time as advanced as any country in Europe, and it was the awful massacres of the Liberals in the nineteenth century, which we shall see, that reduced them to ignorance and beggary. For a time Liberal statesmen, pupils of Voltaire, held power even in Spain and Portugal.

I do not enter into detail about this conflict, which shows how far the Pope was from supremacy, or even from complete respect, in Catholic lands as late as the end of the eighteenth century, because Europe now passed into the revolutionary phase which drove the Catholic monarchs back into the arms of the Pope. Few historians seem to reflect that if it had not been for the French Revolution the Catholic Church would never

---

an English translation of the Brief. One has to go back to *The Jesuits* by R. Demaus, published in 1873, for a full English translation of the document.

have been burdened with the ridiculous dogma of Papal infallibility and the slavish prostration which the Vatican now exacts; just as in our time the Church would have lost a further hundred million adherents if the spread of a new revolutionary wave had not enabled the Papacy to find truculent allies. Few, again, reflect that if, as we ought, we understand by the French Revolution the revolt of the year 1789, and do not spread the phrase over four years, it was more moderate than the American Revolution which preceded it, since it retained the throne and the establishment of the Church; or that the horrors which were perpetrated four years later were in large part provoked by the action of the Pope and the refugee prelates which led to the appalling civil war in the West and the invasion of France from the East.

It is not possible, and would not be relevant, to repeat here what I have elsewhere written about the French Revolution and the Church, but a few points must be stated.[1] The first is that the licence and luxury of the higher clergy and the nobles continued until the outbreak of the Revolution, and in Italy and Spain as well as in France these were accompanied by an appalling misery of the mass of the people and a gross social order. It will be enough to consider the Papal Kingdom when the Popes resumed power after the fall of Napoleon; Martin Hume's *Modern Spain* may be consulted as to the grossness of life in Spain; and the condition of the mass of the people in France is well known. Hence the first public utterance of Pius VI on the French Revolution was wholly misguided, and is discreetly ignored by writers who would have us regard the Popes as preachers of social and political justice. The National Assembly, which still included most of the nobles and higher clergy in August (1789), had formulated the Rights of Man as the basis

[1] Nearly the whole of the tenth volume of my *True Story of the Roman Catholic Church* (1930) is devoted to the subject, and the recognized authorities are quoted.

of a new Constitution. On August 4 the clerical and aristocratic leaders had voluntarily renounced their privileges, and this declaration—equality, democracy, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech—naturally followed. If the Pope had been content to quarrel with the raw principle of equal rights, which was taken from Rousseau, we could understand him, but he made a quite stupid attack (March 29, 1790) upon the ideas of democracy, freedom of conscience, general education, and liberty of discussion. His appeal to the Garden of Eden, the divine right of kings, and so on, amused the world.

His next step, his condemnation of the system of State clergy, who should swear loyalty to the Republic, is what any Pope would be expected to take, but we must not lose sight of the consequences. Many of the higher clergy had fled with the nobles, but the Pope's condemnation early in 1791 of the new status of the clergy drove larger numbers of them into exile, to swell the demand abroad for foreign intervention, or, in Brittany, caused them to start a civil war which diverted very large military forces just when the formidable armies of Prussia and Austria invaded the country. This led to the September Massacre. It is now acknowledged that only a few hundred Parisians were involved in this, to the horror of the majority, and since the victims were in large part criminals and prostitutes from the jails, and Paris was still so Catholic that in the summer of 1791 the Corpus Christi procession had been held as usual in its streets, the motive was mainly to purify Paris.

References to the "French Revolution" (generally meaning a period of four years) are usually so slovenly that most people will be surprised to learn that, in spite of immense pressure from the people and a widespread abandonment of their functions by the priests, Robespierre refused to disestablish the Church until 1794, and Danton supported him in this until he died. Robespierre, a very

serious Theist, scorned Atheism as a " vice of the aristocrats." Meantime priests and people had abandoned the Church in an amazing manner, and in the provinces the practice spread of holding pageants or services in honour of Liberty, which was personified in one of the most virtuous as well as most beautiful girls of the town. Paris was the last to take up the idea, and it coupled Reason with Liberty. The clergy of Notre Dame had already surrendered the cathedral to the municipality, but the altars were decently draped and not used. The Opera Company organized the pageant, which was entirely decorous. It was " an Offering to Liberty." The chief actress personified Liberty—not a *goddess* of Liberty, much less a goddess of Reason—and, standing away from the altars, she recited a dignified Ode to Liberty by the chief poet of the time, Chenier.[1]

The Red Terror followed as a result of the political quarrel of the followers of Danton and Robespierre. We read in what is now the standard history of the period, Lavisse's *Histoire de France Contemporaine* (1920, II, 199), that of the 20,000 victims no less than 67 per cent. were of the working class, and only 6 per cent. of the aristocratic class and 8 per cent. ecclesiastics. The *Cambridge History* (VIII, 372) adds that " to suggest that the fiendish excesses of the government [Robespierre] had been in any sense acceptable to the mass of Frenchmen is ludicrous," and that the executions were " for the benefit of a gang of corrupt scoundrels who, in the judgment of one of the shrewdest contemporary observers of the Revolution, could claim in Paris no more than 3000 adherents " (VIII, 372). Let me add that in the St. Bartholomew Massacre the Catholics had murdered in a

[1] On this point and the general question of the Revolution and the Church, see the work, *Christianity and the French Revolution* (1927), in which Professor Aulard, the leading authority, gives the final results of French research. Yet within the last twenty years one English book after another has repeated the lie about a prostitute singing an obscene song from an altar in Notre Dame.

few days twice as many as the revolutionaries slew in five years: that in the clerical-royalist or White Terror which followed the death of Robespierre and the fall of Napoleon, of which few ever hear, as many were killed, and with equal brutality, as in the revolution-period: and that between 1820 and 1860 the clerical-royalists slew more than ten times as many as the victims of the Revolution, and nearly a hundred times as many as the clerical and aristocratic victims.

Indeed, during the pontificate of Pius VI, and with his full approval, the clerical-royalists of Naples butchered and tortured "Jacobins," as they called every man or woman of democratic sentiment—the clergy calculated that there were 50,000 among the educated Neapolitans in 1793—for five years. Thousands died, and the savagery was beyond anything seen in revolutionary France; and the Neapolitan leader was the Pope's special representative, Cardinal Ruffo. The mob roasted and ate the bodies of democrats under the palace windows, and leaders of the royal troops had the blood-dripping heads of slain captives decorating the table while they dined. These things are not the prejudiced gossip of fugitives abroad, as are the stories about the French Revolutionaries, but are described by a Catholic officer of the royal army, General Colletta, who was there at the time. Yet for a hundred writers who dwell upon the horrors of the French Revolution there is not one who speaks of the White Terror.

We return to this subject in the next chapter, and must here resume the story of the Papacy. The troubles of Pius VI with the Catholic monarchs gave place to a terrible anxiety for the Church as the French armies marched from land to land. There are contemporaries who wondered whether the Papacy was not extinct when Pius VI died in 1799. Napoleon was now the master of France and Italy, and, though he proposed to restore the Church and make it help to guarantee the stability of his

power, it was to be a Church modified by his own requirements. Pius VI had allied himself with Austria, and the French had overrun Italy and helped the Romans to found a Republic. To meet the grave problems of this new situation the cardinals who met at Venice in 1800 elected a Benedictine monk, Pius VII.

The story of Pius VII is the story of his relations with Napoleon, and so large a literature has been written about this that an outline will suffice here. We may set aside disdainfully the Catholic claim that he had either ability or energy, but at his side he had a Secretary of State, Cardinal Consalvi, who combined both with the opportunism of a diplomat and the worldliness of a secular prince. He had just sufficient moral delicacy to refuse, owing to his love of pleasure, as he told Talleyrand, to become a priest. It was Consalvi who compelled the reluctant Pope to bless the marriage of ex-bishop Talleyrand and to tell that cynical statesman, who remained a sceptic all his life, that he was " overjoyed at learning of your ardent desire to be reconciled with us and the Catholic Church." Napoleon himself in later years described Talleyrand's marriage as " a triumph of immorality," but at the time he wanted to rid France of all the plebeian licence of revolutionary years, and so ordered him to marry his mistress.

When, in 1801, Napoleon sent to Rome the draft of a Concordat in terms which appalled the zealots, Consalvi, who was in France, said that to press it would kill the Pope. Whether it did or not, Napoleon told him, it must be signed within five days; and it was signed. The zealots in Rome put placards on the walls describing the Pope as a traitor. The refugee prelates in England and elsewhere, who learned that the Pope had not secured the return of their property or the ejection of the constitutionalist bishops, called him Judas. Catholics of all countries were further outraged when, in 1804, Napoleon ordered the Pope, who wriggled like an eel, to come to

Paris and crown him Emperor. It was a violent repudiation of the Papal doctrine of the divine right of kings. Joseph de Maistre, one of the leading Catholic writers of Europe, said that, since the Pope had sacrificed his dignity and importance, he trusted that he " would go so far in his self-degradation as to become a mere puppet of no consequence."

The Pope's compliance with the degrading demands of Napoleon during several years—he had now been forced to discharge Consalvi—was in large part due to his fear of losing the remainder of the Papal States. But Napoleon annexed them in 1808 and, when Pius excommunicated him, had him shifted from Rome by French troops. The French and Austrian clergy granted Napoleon his divorce from Josephine, and fourteen cardinals were present at the marriage with Marie Louise, while the Pope lingered miserably in Savona. But Napoleon still needed the Pope's consent to the institution of bishops, of whom a large number were required in France, and how he obtained the Pope's consent that the French archbishops should institute these bishops is one of the few controverted points in the Pope's career. Some Catholic writers say that he never made this " betrayal "; others say that he was drugged: others that he was mentally unbalanced from ill-health. I have shown in my *Crises in the History of the Papacy* that he orally consented, or else the Archbishop of Tours lied; and he later gave written consent. He nearly died from shame and remorse.

On his return from Russia Napoleon ordered Pius, who had meantime been removed to Fontainebleau, to sign a new Concordat in which he renounced all claims to temporal power. It is not disputed that he signed this. The " black " or stricter cardinals were now permitted to attend him, and they demanded that he should retract and defy Napoleon. Pius wrote a few lines a day of the new document, and, as Napoleon's spies were numerous

what he wrote was taken away daily in a cardinal's pocket. Napoleon was at last presented with the Pope's letter repudiating the Concordat, but this was in 1813, when his world was crumbling. When the Allies crossed the Rhine, in January, 1814, the Pope was sent back to Italy; and he returned to Rome after the first abdication of Napoleon. He at once restored the Jesuits, reopened the monasteries, set up the Inquisition, and thrust the Jews back into the ghetto. Every trace of new ideas was to be obliterated: even the lighting of the streets of Rome by oil-lamps. For a time, in 1815, he shuddered afresh, and fled from Rome when the news came of Napoleon's escape from Elba. But the Hundred Days soon passed, and the work of restoring the Middle Ages in the Papal States was resumed.

CHAPTER V

THE BLOODY REACTION IN PAPAL LANDS

The fright which the French Revolution and its Napoleonic sequel had given to the monarchs of Europe drove the Catholic kings back into close alliance with the Papacy and made an end of Gallican, Febronian, and other Catholic attempts to check the Pope's pretensions. The last spark of Jacobinism, which meant even the mildest aspiration toward constitutional monarchy, freedom of speech, and education of the people, must be trodden out. It is a grave defect of modern historical education that the epic struggle for these rights from 1820 to about 1860 is either ignored or deceptively attenuated. Catholic authorities are particularly eager to suppress the facts because of at least 300,000 unarmed men, women, and even children who died in massacres, on the scaffold, or in pestilential jails during that time for claiming what we now consider elementary human rights, all but about a thousand perished in Catholic countries which were in the most docile subjection to and closest correspondence with Rome; and in each of these countries the Pope's special representatives (Nuncios) and the higher clergy approved, and often instigated, the foulest excesses.

The more Catholic the country, indeed, the more savage were the torture and bloodshed. The Kingdom of the Sicilies (Italy and Sicily) witnessed the longest and vilest reaction. General Colletta claims that there were 200,000 victims from 1790 to 1830, and his Neapolitan successor claims 250,000 in the next thirty years; and as late as 1860 the brutality of the oppression shocked all Europe. These figures are uncertain, since it is very

difficult to compile them, and in the case of Italy they include a percentage of armed rebels, but after a severe inquiry I find that at least 300,000 men and women, who never took up arms, and in massacres large numbers of children, perished in Italy, Spain, and Portugal. In the Pope's own kingdom, with a population of about 3,000,000, many thousands died by execution, in massacres, or in jails of an incredibly cruel character. The savagery of the clerical-royalists and the foul character of most of the monarchs are described in the *Cambridge Modern History* and all authoritative manuals. In France, where there remained a strong anti-clerical minority, the victims were, apart from armed rebels, much less numerous, though far more numerous than had been the clerical and aristocratic victims of the Revolution. In Austria, where the reforms of Joseph II were not wholly forgotten, it was much the same. In England and Prussia few were executed.

One other point must be made. The social order which was protected by this brutality was as inefficient as it was unjust, and it was at its worst in the Pope's own States. On this all authorities are agreed. Lady Blennerhassett (a Catholic historian) approvingly quotes in the *Cambridge Modern History* (X, 164) the reflection of Father Lamennais, on visiting Rome, that it was "the most hideous sewer that ever offended the eye of man." All the reforms which the French had made were abolished when Pius VII returned, and a bloated hierarchy of priests fattened upon one of the poorest and most ignorant populations in Europe. Graft, bribery, brigandage, beggary, prison-life, crime, and illiteracy were worse than in any other kingdom. When the Austrians suppressed a rebellion of the Pope's subjects in 1831—the Papal army under Cardinal Albani committing the most atrocious outrages—England, Prussia, Russia, Austria, and France addressed to Gregory XVI a stern memorandum on the disgraceful condition of his kingdom and

ordered him to reform it. The journalists and literary men who now hail the Popes as our leading guides on social and political morality ought to read what sort of kingdom the Popes maintained until after the middle of the last century.[1]

The struggle to defend this social order against what was called revolutionary sentiment is almost all that we have to tell about the remaining years (1815–1823) of Pius VII and the pontificates of Leo XII, Pius VIII, and Gregory XVI. Indeed, there is little else of general interest to be said about the long pontificate (1846–1878) of Pius IX, though the struggle now assumes a new form. Pius VII had at once recalled Consalvi, and that cardinal is often represented as checking the mad fury of the zealots. The facts show, however, that he was a complete reactionary. Every reform that the French had introduced was abolished. All the clerical abuses were restored, the Papal finances soon fell once more into deep disorder, while 2436 monasteries and nunneries were reopened. Such schools as there were passed under the control of the Jesuits; and the dishonesty of the claim that they were " great educators " is seen in the fact that twenty years later only 2 per cent. of the rural population attended school, often for only two hours a day. As late as 1890, when Mulhall published his *Dictionary of Statistics*, the five countries which stood at the top of the list in percentage of literates were all Protestant. They had 87 to 97 per cent., while South Italy, Spain, and Portugal had only 20 to 28 per cent. of literates in the population. Yet with these relics of medieval conditions lingering to our own time we are asked to listen courteously to claims that the Popes have always promoted education and social

[1] Contemporary Italian historians, mostly Catholics, like Farini, Cantú, D'Azeglio, etc., say just the same as recent authorities like Bolton King, Orsi, Thayer, and the *Cambridge History*. They report the state of personal morals as equally foul. See also for this period Bishop F. Nielsen's *History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century* (1906) and F. Nippold's *Papacy in the Nineteenth Century* (1900).

justice. To the very end their own kingdom was, in the words of the British ambassador at Rome, " the opprobrium of Europe."

Pius VII, who even condemned Bible Societies as " a most abominable invention that destroyed the very foundations of religion," died in 1823—so low was Italian culture that they had to employ a foreigner and a notorious sceptic to carve his monument—and Leo XII, an elderly invalid, indeed a converted rake, issued from the furious struggle of fanatical and moderate cardinals. " You are electing a dead man," he warned them, yet with its customary indifference to truth the *Catholic Encyclopædia* says :—

> There is something pathetic in the contrast between the intelligence and masterly energy displayed by him as ruler of the Church and the inefficiency of his policy as ruler of the Papal States.

The sole object of this ludicrous and untruthful statement is to mislead any Catholic reader who may have dipped into a history of Italy—any non-Catholic history—and learned the appalling condition of the Papal States. Leo's " intelligence and masterly energy " displayed themselves in his order that tin fig-leaves must be put upon the classical statues, and the workers must drink outside the wine-shops so that the police can hear them if they swear. He was despised in Europe and in Italy and was " hated by all, princes and beggars," says L. von Ranke. Rome, says Bunsen, who was there, hailed his death " with indecent joy." He had chosen as his Secretary of State a fanatical cardinal who was eighty years old, and he put Cardinal Rivarola, whose excesses shocked Europe, at the head of his army. The squalid jails were overcrowded, and the country was red with blood and revolt, while the senile Pope amused himself shooting birds in the Vatican garden.

Yet even in this grave crisis, and in spite of the world ridicule of Leo, the cardinals elected as his successor a

paralysed old man who literally drivelled like a baby as they wheeled him about the Vatican. He lasted twenty months, and the electoral battle was resumed. After five weeks of acrid and futile wrangles, the Austrian and French Governments had to defy the rules of the Conclave and send men to bring them to their senses, addressing them through the window. Europe was passing into its second revolutionary period (1830). Paris had revolted, and men were in arms all over the Papal States. The chief cardinal in the Conclave, Albani, was an aged *roué* who was known as such throughout Europe, and the monk-cardinal who was elected, Gregory XVI, had, in the words of one of the more lenient historians, " a pronounced weakness for Orvieto wine " and " absorbed himself in ignoble interests while the country groaned under misrule."

He was vulgar, lazy, and sensual. He loved the salacious French novels of Paul de Kock, and was on such terms with his valet that the lighter Roman gossip gave him the man's wife as a mistress. Such still was Papal Rome only a century ago, while the condition of the Papal States was, in spite of a few superficial reforms, fouler than ever. Gregory ignored the stern warning of the five Powers to reform his dominions, and he raised loans, at an interest of 30 per cent., to cover his enormous annual deficit. Six thousand political prisoners were meantime tortured in his squalid jails, and hundreds of the best Italians fled abroad. Industry and commerce were grossly neglected, the universities closed, and even such new inventions as gas and railways excluded from the Papal States. Gregory found time between his wine-and-sweet parties and reading the reports of his innumerable spies to groan over the state of his " Atheistic and rebellious country," as he called it, and to detect the cause in " the criminal and insane tendencies of the Waldenses, Beghards, Wicliffites, and other similar sons of Belial ": all of whom had died out four hundred years

before. And Catholic writers claim that he was the most learned Pope since Benedict XIV.

For fifteen years, while Europe fought its way to the general revolt of 1848 and science was making its first triumphant advance, Central Italy and the southern Catholic countries generally lingered under this stupid tyranny, while good men and women were slain by the ten thousand—more than 100,000 had died in twenty years—for peaceful opposition to it. These are facts of life less than a century ago—the facts which caused Lord Acton to declare the Pope of his own Church " worse than the accomplices of the Old Man of the Mountain " (the worst assassins in history)—yet writers who dangle before us the worst libels of the French Revolution would have us forget these facts and respect the legend of the serene wisdom and integrity of the Popes. But Gregory died in 1846, and, after a more scandalous Conclave-fight than ever, the Church got a " liberal Pope," Pius IX.

Catholics cling to the myth of the liberality, saintliness, and wisdom of Pius IX, although his name is attached to the most stupid condemnation of modern principles or sentiments (the Syllabus) that the nineteenth century produced, and he presided over the bloodiest phase of the struggle against the modern spirit in Italy. Dozens of Catholic biographers maintain the myth, while hostile biographers (Petruccelli della Gattina, T. A. Trollope, etc.) bring grave charges against his character in his youth and represent him as an epileptic of poor intelligence. The truth is that as prelate and cardinal he had been too amiable and liberal in disposition to agree with the zealots and their regime of cruelty, but there is not the least evidence that he seriously studied the age and its movements and problems. As Pope he at first listened flatteringly to the more moderate Liberals, but when he found more radical popular leaders acclaiming him as a reform Pope he was bewildered and uneasy. He released political prisoners soon after his election, yet a few months

later he denounced Bible Societies, freedom of the Press, and secret political organizations. He opened schools and admitted a few carefully selected laymen to the administration.

It is idle to describe these things. The third French Revolution, in February, 1848, fired all Europe, and the democratic revolt spread from country to country. Pius now quarrelled with the Romans by refusing to declare war upon Austria, which had been for thirty years the evil genius of the reaction, and they rose against him. Nervously, like other kings in that amazing year, he granted all that was asked, then fled in disguise to Gaeta and disavowed his promises. How the Romans then set up a secular Republic and how a French army destroyed it for the Pope is familiar history. Pius—" Pius the Ninth the Second," the Romans said—returned in the spring of 1850, a thorough reactionary for the rest of his life. While the allied monarchs were bloodily suppressing the new democracies everywhere, the Pope had been absorbed at Gaeta in preparing for publication the new dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Sublunary affairs he now left mainly to his Secretary of State, Cardinal Antonelli, a greedy, sensual, and loose man who, like Consalvi, had declined to become a priest: a man who was born in a squalid cottage and at death left a fortune of £4,000,000 and a natural daughter, the Countess Lambertini, fighting for it. The Papal jails, in which many political prisoners were chained to the wall and not released even for exercise or sanitary purposes, were soon packed with 8000 prisoners, and hundreds were executed. It was the Papal States under " the saintly Pius," less than eighty years ago, which Lord Clarendon, our ambassador at Rome, branded " the opprobrium of Europe." There was only one fouler patch, Naples; and this was almost as much subject to the Pope as the Papal States were.

So we will not follow Pius IX through the thirty years

(1848–1878) which remained of his pontificate. Cavour, the strong man of the Sardinian monarchy, to which Italians now looked for the unification of their country, pointed out to France that, since the Pope and his Jesuits flouted all warnings to reform, and thus fostered the revolutionary sentiment, the reform must be undertaken by others. He in 1859 started the expulsion of Austrians from Italy, and in 1860 he ordered a plebiscite in the Legations, the northern part of the Pope's dominions. The people voted in an overwhelming majority for the rule of Victor Emmanuel, who now became King of Italy, instead of that of the Pope; and Garibaldi worked up from the south toward Rome. Umbria and the Marches then, after a defeat of the Pope's ragged army, had a plebiscite, and only 1592 out of 225,450 voted for the Pope.

Pius had now only Rome and its province, and the Italian Government offered him rich compensation if he would abandon all claim to secular rule. Cardinal Antonelli advised it—he is said to have accepted a bribe of 3,000,000 crowns—but the Jesuits egged on the Pope to resist, while scepticism and disdain spread in Rome itself. They thought it opportune to issue, in 1864, a flat defiance of all modern sentiments in the form of a Syllabus (or list) of eighty propositions which were "reprobated, proscribed, and condemned"; even such propositions as that "every man is free to embrace and profess the religion which, judging by the light of human reason, he believes to be true," and "men may find the way of eternal salvation, and attain it, in any religion." The world shuddered at the Pope's stupidity, and the Italian Government took over Rome (1870). Catholic writers still protest that the plebiscites were useless because the Pope had ordered Catholics to abstain from voting. The fact is that in the city of Rome four-fifths of the male adults (40,785) voted against the Pope, so that few besides the priests, monks, and Papal officials abstained or wanted

the secular rule of the Papacy to continue. In the Roman province as a whole 133,681 voted against the Pope and 1507 for him. He refused the offer of 3,250,000 *lire* a year and sovereign rights, shut himself in the Vatican, and concentrated upon forcing or bribing the Catholic bishops of the world, who now gathered in Rome (December 1869) for the Vatican Council, to pass the new dogma of the infallibility of the Popes.

Such a declaration must seem to any man who has followed me throughout this work unintelligible, but the "definition" of the dogma was drafted by the Jesuits, with all the long series of Papal blunders before them. The dogma declares that a Pope is infallible only when he speaks to the world, on faith or morals, in his official character as infallible Pope. So all previous blunders were just unofficial personal expressions of opinion; and, since no Pope from that day to this has dared to use his supposed infallible prerogative, the dogma is one of the idlest of formulæ. Yet even in this careful form it was heatedly resisted. A petition to the Pope to make the declaration was signed, to his deep anger, by only about 400 out of the 700 bishops, while after six months of passionate quarrels—bishops who were present told me cynical stories of the open heat and the quiet bribery—eighty-eight still voted against the dogma, and a further sixty-two voted for it with a reservation.

In thirty-two years Pius IX had wrought irreparable harm to his Church. Scepticism—checked only for a few years by the political reaction in the 'seventies—had captured the majority of the French people, and was spreading rapidly in the middle classes of Austria, Italy, and Spain. Rome was blind, as usual, to far-off events, and millions of Catholic emigrants to America were lost. Some Catholic writers put the loss at 10,000,000 or more. And the claim that this disintegration was arrested by Leo XIII is just one more myth which Catholic writers have imposed upon our literature. In 1909, six years

after the death of Leo, I showed in my *Decay of the Church of Rome* that in the previous hundred years the Church had lost, in actual seceders and the children of seceders, about 100,000,000 members—far more than at the Reformation—and that of less than 200,000,000 who remained in it 120,000,000 were illiterate.[1]

Leo XIII, though the ablest Pope since Benedict XIV, is quite absurdly described as having " saved the Church " by his diplomatic ability and statesmanship. Travelling in Italy in the year after his death I found, especially in Rome, that the Church had lost the great majority of the middle class and was rapidly losing the urban workers. By careful research later I fixed the loss at about 6,000,000 : a conservative estimate, seeing that scurrilous anti-clerical papers like *L'Asino* and *Il Papagallo* sold a million copies a week. For this rapid decay Leo XIII was very largely responsible. He thoroughly alienated the men of the Italian middle class by maintaining as long as he lived the excommunication of the King and his statesmen, although the plebiscite had decisively shown the wishes of the people. He alienated the workers by the very Encyclicals on social questions which were lauded in the English Press as gospels of social justice. Italian workers were not impressed by declarations that they were entitled to a living wage when the Pope refused to reply even to episcopal requests for some sort of definition what a living wage is. Leo denounced Socialism as criminal, and it made rapid progress.

In France his work was still more disastrous. When he acceded, in 1878, the country was at least nominally Catholic, and the Church had considerable power. The revolt of the Communards in 1871 had alarmed the people, and there had been a remarkable return to church-

[1] Curiously enough, this is the one book of mine to which any Catholic " reply " has been attempted. To my 300 pages, packed with statistics and quotations from Catholic writers, a Jesuit replied with a twopenny pamphlet in which there is not the least examination of the evidence I accumulated.

going. One of Leo's worst blunders was to lose the whole advantage of this by refusing to recognize the Republic until near the end of the century (1892). French statesmen found the people so alienated by this obstinate adherence to the royalists that they began to secularize the schools and the government. In 1875 it was estimated that thirty million Frenchmen were Catholics. At the death of Leo XIII only about 6,000,000—Sabatier wrote me that I ought to say 4,000,000—could be counted as Catholics. It is amusing to find English and American Catholics to-day admiring the political wisdom of Leo's Encyclical *Immortale Dei* (1885) "On the Christian Constitution of States." By an audacious trick they have changed the word "Catholic" to "Christian." This Encyclical, which is addressed to a country, France, in regard to which Leo had shown supreme political *unwisdom*, is—several passages are altered in the English translation—just a medieval attack upon the French for daring to disestablish the Church, and it is rich in the sentiments of the Syllabus.

In Germany the policy inaugurated by Leo led, in a way which he could not be expected to foresee, to the ruin of the most flourishing national branch of the Church. The Kulturkampf, or fight against Bismarck for the Catholic schools, was at its height when Leo acceded, and he rightly supported the German prelates. But Bismarck presently became more concerned about the growth of Socialism and the discontent of the Catholics of Alsace-Lorraine. After years of negotiation the Pope, for certain concessions, agreed to use his influence in Alsace-Lorraine and to assist the Government to combat Socialism. He lived to see the Socialist vote rise from 349,000 to 3,000,000, while the Catholic proportion of the total vote sank from 27·9 to 19·7 per cent. But far worse was to come after his death. Socialists and Communists gained so heavily, as we shall see, at the expense of the Catholics that Hitler found himself in a position to defy

the Pope and his Church after he had, with the Pope's aid, secured power.

In Austria his experience was unhappy, for his direction to the clergy to resist new liberal laws on marriage and education was futile. In regard to Spain he seemed to be more fortunate, as he worked with the Government in its truculent oppression of Socialism and Anarchism; but the brutality of that repression led to a growth of passionate resentment, and the long and intimate association of the Church with the reactionaries brought upon it the hostility of the majority of the people. In Ireland his policy of conciliating the English Government by ordering the Irish to submit to injustice roused the Catholics to anger, while the few favours he received from Westminster did little for the Catholics in England, who did not even increase in proportion to the growth of population and immigration. The ecclesiastical "statesman" actually issued an Encyclical (*Ad Anglos*, April 20, 1895) inviting the English people to submit to his authority and followed this up with an Encyclical (*Apostolicæ Curæ*) denying the validity of Anglican Orders! In America he, still holding the familiar parochial attitude of the Vatican, committed graver blunders. All through the 'nineties he had very serious friction with the American prelates, and in 1899 he startled America by sending to Cardinal Gibbons, for publication, a letter on "Americanism" (American Modernism) in which he arrogantly condemned the whole hierarchy for permitting ideas which every American Catholic holds to-day.

Able and untiring as the Pope was, he was hampered by the poor intelligence service of the Vatican and the stupid fanaticism of the Jesuits, who still had great power at Rome, but his position was in any case hopeless. He wanted to arrest the disintegration of the Church without sacrificing any of the medieval features which made that disintegration inevitable. He directed Catholic scholars to "welcome all truth" and threw open the Secret

Archives of the Vatican; but he had first withdrawn the documents we should most like to consult. He appointed a Commission to study the Bible and modern scholarship, and he then compelled it to publish conclusions which its most learned members—its secretary was a friend of mine—despised. In a world of advancing science and of revolutionary change in philosophy he ordered Catholic seminaries and universities to cling to the medieval philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. He directed the publication of a new edition of Canon Law (Marianus de Luca's *Institutiones Juris Ecclesiastici Publici*, 1901) in which the death-sentence for heretics and every musty Papal claim were emphatically re-affirmed. When he died in 1903 he looked back upon quarter of a century of wasted effort and continued decay.[1]

[1] Most of the diplomatic deals of Leo XIII, against the interest of his Catholic subjects, such as the bargain with England to crush revolt in Ireland and with Germany to use his influence in Alsace-Lorraine and the Polish province, are acknowledged in the official life of him by Mgr. de T'Serclaes (2 vols., 1894).

CHAPTER VI

THE CRUMBLING CHURCH AND THE RETURN TO VIOLENCE

In this last phase of the history of the Papacy we may confine ourselves to a consideration of the rapid disintegration of the Church and the desperate attempts of the Popes to arrest it. In Great Britain and America, where the high Catholic birth-rate, the issue of spurious statistics by the Catholic authorities, and the control of the Press and public libraries give the Church a fallacious appearance of stability, its decay is little realized, and the true meaning of Vatican policy is not perceived. But this disintegration is the central and determining fact of recent Papal behaviour. The steady leakage which continued through the reign of Leo XIII and his successor assumed after 1918, and particularly in what are called Catholic countries, a more alarming form. Tens of millions quitted the Church in a decade and a half and turned upon it with disdain or anger. I have given the precise evidence of this and covered the whole recent period in my *Papacy in Politics To-day* (1937) and may, therefore, here be content with a summary.

At the death of Leo XIII in 1903, when literary men, almost the only converts of any distinction whom the Church wins in our time, were still telling us of the serene wisdom of the Vatican, the cardinal-electors showed that they were as unwise as ever. To meet the formidable problems of the age they chose an elderly and not very intelligent reactionary, Pius X, a man of peasant extraction who had by great diligence obtained a creditable

command of medieval theology and Canon Law. The most urgent problem was the recovery of France, and here the Pope committed monumental blunders. In the early years of the century Catholic writers boasted that, however many had apostatized, France had still 160,000 monks and nuns, and their houses were no longer "the resort of infamous brothel-frequenters"—this is quoted from a bishop—as they had been in the eighteenth century. With the connivance of the Pope, the leading monastic orders now, in the words of the sympathetic Mr. Bodley, "identified themselves with the most inept political party [the royalists] that had ever wrecked a powerful cause." [1] When the Government proposed lenient measures which the French bishops were ready to accept, the Pope sourly forbade them, and the monastic orders were suppressed. It was not until the Republic needed the Pope's influence to curb the Alsace-Lorrainers that diplomatic relations were resumed, and French statesmen, who are all sceptics, shuddered to find themselves occasionally in Church. But Catholic writers admit that the Church has recovered no ground. Some put the number of the faithful at 5,000,000 out of 42,000,000 people.

The peasant-Pope meantime went on from blunder to blunder. He tried to enforce upon Protestant countries the old decree (*Ne temere*) which declared that a marriage with a Protestant was invalid unless a priest performed the ceremony. In Australia Catholics attempted to act upon it, and there was a violent agitation. The Pope then, reminding us rather of Sancho Panza than of Don Quixote, made war upon Modernism. Many of the Church's best scholars were expelled or silenced, papers were suppressed, a regiment of spies was enlisted; and in the end the Pope fatuously struck a gold medal which represented orthodoxy slaying the domestic dragon. The strict medieval law must be enforced upon this wayward Church, and the Pope ordered a new codification—no

[1] *The Church in France*, 1906, p. 51.

law in the world was in such a state of chaos as the age-old law of this statesmanlike Papacy—and publication in the vernacular.

It fell to the next Pope, Benedict XV, to publish this new Code (1918) and finish the war upon scholarship; but he was as purblind to the realities of modern life as his predecessor. There is a chapter on the law in my previous book, and I will make only two points here. It is not the full Code of Church law. The "public" (which really means "secret," since it has to remain in Latin) part of that law is not included, so that Catholic laymen are honestly ignorant that their Church still claims "the right and duty to put heretics to death." Further, although the Pope meant this Italian Code to be translated into all languages, English Catholics have not thought it prudent to publish a translation. The clauses about marriage conflict audaciously with our civil law, to the advantage of the Church, and the prohibition of reading critical works or even holding conversations with critics, and other clauses, would greatly embarrass Catholics in this country who implore us to "read both sides." [1]

Benedict's policy during the War also injured his Church. Since the Italian Government published the fact that his agents were caught in intrigue with Austria, there is no reason to doubt the rumour that Germany had offered to admit the Jesuits and secure independence for him in Rome. When the War dragged out and the

[1] There are two American translations (the text almost buried under commentaries) but how little they are known may be learned from this amusing experience. In 1937 a Catholic actress fell in love with a Protestant married man, whose wife was a Jewess. The man divorced his wife, but the Church does not acknowledge divorce. He was, however, told that if he became a Catholic his marriage would be declared null, and this was done. A speech in which I referred to this was reported, and the *Universe* (June 17, 1938) made merry over my supposed gross ignorance of Catholic law and, of course, refused to insert my polite correction. Thus, apparently, the staff and readers of one of the chief Catholic papers in this country are totally ignorant of one of the oldest clauses of Church law (the Pauline Privilege).

issue became uncertain, he confined himself to pretty pacifist platitudes, and at the close his eagerness to be represented at Versailles was snubbed. But his Secretary of State, Gasparri, saw possibilities in the new map of Europe. France, as I said, needed spiritual sedatives for its new and uneasy subjects in Alsace-Lorraine and Syria, and had to purchase them by a subservience to the Vatican which makes its statesmen writhe. Russia, in smiting its bitterly hostile Orthodox Church, lifted a burden from the back of its Roman Catholic (mainly Polish) minority, and, at the very time when people shuddered at " the godless Bolsheviks," Catholic religious processions were seen in the streets of Leningrad for the first time in history. But a new phenomenon, the rapid spread of Atheistic Communism over the Catholic world, soon bewildered the small-minded Benedict, and in 1922 he died and bequeathed the extraordinary new crisis of his Church to Pius XI.

No Pope since the Middle Ages has been so heavily and repeatedly attacked by Catholics as Pius XI. Several French Catholic writers have denounced him as a simpleton duped by European statesmen and a traitor to the Church when he, to oblige an Atheistic Government, persecuted the Catholic royalists. Germans have never forgiven him for ordering them in 1932 to drop their hostility to Hitler because that unscrupulous apostate had made him promises which, as usual, he disowned as soon as he was in power. Austrian Catholics have the same bitter complaint. American Catholics were shocked by his support of Mussolini's massacre of Abyssinia and are outraged by his alliance with Japan in China and—very many of them at least—by his co-operation with Italy in Spain. English Catholics, who have had the rare experience of seeing one of their own writers attack the Papacy, may be divided on the Pope's action in Spain and know nothing about his support of Japan, but they have been affronted by a shameless exhibition of Vatican

greed.[1] There were very many Catholics who did not rejoice when, in 1937, the Pope recovered from a dangerous illness. There are many who do not mourn to-day.

I must refer to my earlier work for the proofs that the ground of his main policy is the fact that during the fifteen years after the War his Church lost at least 50,000,000 followers, or nearly one-fourth of its total membership, in the Catholic provinces of Germany, and in Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, Spain, Mexico, and South America. Ignoring, or ignorant of, the fact that the Church has decayed for more than half a century, and that secessions were bound to increase in the twentieth century, he came to the conclusion that the spread of Bolshevism was the chief cause. He had the usual muddled idea of a priest as to what Bolshevism is, and he was probably ignorant that outside Russia Socialism made for greater progress than Communism. In his early years of office, indeed, he made an effort to secure the favour of the Soviet leaders just when they are supposed to have been most cruel. In 1922 he intrigued to obtain, and did obtain, entry into Russia on the pretext of helping to relieve the famine. The most mendacious book about Russian atrocities and persecution of religion is that of the American Jesuit, Father E. A. Walsh, yet this man was the Pope's chief agent in Russia and was courteously treated from 1922 to 1924, when his intrigues were exposed. Then the Pope discovered that these had really been years of, he said, atrocious persecution, and he raised the fiery cross. A powerful ally had appeared on the horizon.

Eight months after he had ascended the Papal throne he saw the Fascists usurp power in Rome and announce a war upon Communism. Although Mussolini had previously abandoned his fierce anti-clericalism and now made courteous gestures (the gift of a valuable library,

[1] For the canonization of Sir Thomas More and John Fisher the Vatican charged them £13,000, besides £4000 for a chalice for the Pope. See my *Papacy in Politics*, p. 190.

etc.) to the Vatican, the blasphemies and threats he had poured out until little more than a year earlier were painfully fresh in the mind of Roman ecclesiastics, and his approaches were coldly received. Next year General de Rivera imitated the military Fascist usurpation in Spain, and the Pope saw a drastic anti-Communist dictatorship in close alliance with the Church; and the visit to Rome of Rivera in some sense linked the Vatican and the Quirinal, which the Spanish dictator regarded as equal shrines of his faith. While, however, the Pope cordially supported the Fascist regime in Spain, the obstacles in Italy remained formidable. Mussolini was an apostate, and his followers were predominantly anti-clerical; on the other hand, Liberalism and Socialism remained very powerful in Italy, and at the time of the murder of Matteotti very gravely shook Mussolini's power. After 1925 the Duce entered upon a truculent policy of suppression, consolidated his strength, and at last sought the alliance with the Vatican, which would, he thought, bring some 20,000,000 Catholics into the body of his supporters.

It seems likely that the Duce had in mind the action of Napoleon, but he found that Pius XI was a very different man from Pius VII, and that he himself was no Napoleon. The Pope drove a hard bargain, while the leading Fascists bitterly opposed any surrender to him. In the end he got £19,000,000 (the sum assigned to the Papacy in 1870 and interest thereon)—it is said that he lost the cash part of this (£8,000,000) in the American crash later in the year —108 acres of Rome as a politically independent Vatican City, control of all the schools (but not universities) of Italy, and the embodiment in the Civil Law of some of the most hated clauses of the Canon Law. The Church was established and endowed, the criticism of religion was made a penal offence, religious marriage was enforced, and the clergy and ecclesiastical property got considerable relief from taxation.

For this the Pope sold his silence about the usurpation

of power, the suppression of liberty, the brutal treatment of opponents, and the professed design of Mussolini to create " a race of conquerors " and give Italy an Empire by aggressive war. During the negotiations, which were drawn out for months by their mutual incriminations and the amazing attempts of the Pope to assert quite medieval claims (which the British and American Press suppressed), the Pope frequently objected that the Duce's entire conception of the State was pagan, not Christian; and in later encounters—for the Fascists fumed under the new law and often violated it—he at times ventured to repeat his charges. But he had sold his moral authority in 1929 when he signed the Treaty; and when the Catholics of England and America looked to him for a condemnation of the Abyssinian outrage, they heard only of two ambiguous and almost casual utterances, which the Italians regarded as approval, and the entire body of the Italian clergy and hierarchy, with the Pope's consent, enthusiastically applauded the campaign.

All this I have described in detail, with the evidence, in my earlier book. The next step in the development of the Pope's policy was his endorsement, in 1932, of Hitler's programme. Through the Catholic Von Papen he obtained from Hitler an assurance of favourable terms for his Church in Germany, and he ordered the German bishops to direct the Catholics, while continuing to support their own political parties, to drop the hostility to the Nazis. This and the burning of the Reichstag by Goering's agents put Hitler in power in 1933, and he soon began to violate the Concordat with the Vatican which he had signed. Neither the Pope nor the German hierarchy had a word of condemnation for the gross outrages which followed the Nazi victory, and only at times was the Pope stung into censure by the Nazi tactics (suppression of Catholic organizations, legal prosecution of hundreds of monks and priests for vice, etc.) which were ruining what was left of the most flourishing branch of the Church.

Few Catholics know, since the British Press suppressed the fact, that the Pope ordered his clergy in the East to support the Japanese in their vile campaign, and most of them are reconciled to his action in Spain by the usual loose talk about Bolshevism and atrocities, but they beg us to note that the worst of the aggressor nations, Germany, is actually hostile to the Papacy. The suppression in the Press of the appalling exposure of the monks, though their guilt is not in the least questioned by any daily in the Catholic provinces, and of the rapid decay of the German Catholic body has, in fact, made the situation in Germany obscure for most people. The truth is that the Pope kept silent about all the atrocities committed by the Nazis because he continued year after year to seek co-operation with Hitler. On September 12, 1933, the Nazi organ, *Die Nazionale Zeitung*, published a letter of the Catholic bishops, which was to be read in all Catholic churches, appealing to Hitler to accept their aid in " fighting the ever-increasing threat of world-Bolshevism which shows its sinister hand in Spain, Russia, and Mexico." The Pope used the same language in an address at Rome a few days later, and the slogan spread through the entire Catholic world. As late as 1936 he was still pleading for co-operation, as the *Times* (November 13) reported. He had on the previous day sent Cardinal Faulhaber, head of the German Church, to plead with the Führer, who disdainfully ignored the offer. The Catholic Church in Germany, Hitler said, was now too far advanced in decay to require consideration.

In Austria the Catholics or so-called " Christian Socialists," under the lead of Dollfuss, had consulted the Pope and Mussolini before they enfeebled their country by driving the Socialists into rebellion and imposing a semi-Fascist regime. When, in the spring of 1938, Mussolini cynically abandoned them to Hitler, the Pope was disturbed, but Cardinal Innitzer, head of the Austrian Church, flew to Rome and persuaded Pius that it would

strengthen the hands of the Catholics in Germany itself if Austria entered the Reich. Through Innitzer, in fact, the Pope received fresh assurances from Hitler that the Church would be respected. It was, therefore, under the Pope's directions that the cardinal and the leading bishops ordered the Austrian Catholics to vote for Hitler. We do not yet know if the Pope was consulted when the Catholics of Sudeten Czecho-Slovakia secured, through Henlein, a similar promise of favourable treatment, which prompted them to join the seditious movement that led to annexation, but it would be difficult to doubt that the authorization of Rome was sought. Thus for five years the Pope was alternately duped and insulted by Hitler, and we can attach little moral value to the censures which he began at length to pass upon Germany.

In South America, where fifteen to twenty million left the Church between 1918 and 1935, the Pope followed the same policy of adhering to dictators and, through the local archbishops, supporting the savagery of which they have been guilty in some Republics. To-day only two of the smaller Republics, Chile and Colombia, are free democracies: in most of them a clerical-military dictatorship rules. The Popes return to their traditional weapon: violence. For some years they relied, as they still do in democratic countries, upon what they call Catholic Action. After 1500 years of clerical monopoly of the Church-work they felt that to meet the terrible menaces of the twentieth century they would have to enlist the services of the laity. All kinds of organizations, especially for young men, were created; and their functions varied from assassination in Spain and military training in South America to the intimidation of editors, booksellers, publishers, and librarians in England and America. In Catholic countries the new tactic entirely failed to arrest the disintegration of the Church, and the policy of alliance with capitalists, militarists, and political adventurers was launched.

The Papacy, with the world, returns to the Middle Ages. When the Pope called for the destruction of Bolshevism in Spain, Russia, and Mexico—a formula which has been echoed throughout the entire Catholic world—his meaning was unmistakable. His Papal banner floats over the rebel citadel at Burgos, and his priests support the Japanese in China, so that he already blesses two horrible wars, one at least of which (in China) is plainly criminal in its scope and unspeakably foul in its procedure. In calling further for the destruction of Bolshevism in Russia and asking Hitler to permit him to co-operate in this he just as plainly gives his blessing in advance to the most criminal part of Hitler's programme, the design to invade and annex the Ukraine: a design so utterly destitute of principle and involving a war of such horrible proportions that the Führer himself very rarely and discreetly refers to it. And when the Pope wants to co-operate in destroying Bolshevism in Mexico there is only one possible interpretation of his words: the United States, where a large and wealthy minority have long been eager to annex Mexico, shall have the support of the rich and powerful American Catholic Church and its billion-dollar resources if it carries out this totally immoral design. That there *is* no Bolshevism in Mexico—its moderate Socialist Government is so little attached to Moscow that it gives every encouragement to Trotsky—does not matter. American finance wants Mexico's resources; and the Mexicans have quitted the Church in millions. So let there be war; let another area of the earth be reddened with the blood of women and children.

It is an amazing consummation of one of the strangest chapters in the history of religion. When, in the closing years of the eighteenth century, the French armies overran Rome, and their officers saw Pius VI wear a gilded cardboard tiara instead of the richly jewelled bead-pieces of his predecessors, they said that this was the last Pope. By a new alliance with murder the Popes recovered their

power; and the dispersal of the Irish race over the British Empire and the newly-created world of North America opened out to them a golden prospect. Men began to dream of a time when visitors to the ruins of London would still find the Pope ruling half the world. But with the era of general education, abundant cheap literature, and free libraries the disintegration began again; and the Church in the course of a century lost fully one-half of its adult and educated members. It tried to meet the new danger by flooding the world with as false a literature as the lives of the martyrs or the Forged Decretals, a threat of eternal damnation to its subjects if they read any other literature, and, in the twentieth century, an increasing adulteration of non-Catholic literature, journalism, and education, on the plea that they must not be offensive to Catholics. A fresh revolutionary movement destroyed these defences over half the Catholic world, and the Papacy reverted to the policy of the thirteenth century.

It is customary to conclude such stories as this with a few words of forecast, but we have entered an age when no man can see even a few months ahead through the horrid murk. The future history of the Papacy will be determined by the general history of what is left of civilization. If the world returns to the Middle Ages, the Popes may expect to find themselves in a congenial world; unless, as is not impossible, the Swastika displaces the Italian cross over the greater part of the world. Indeed, it is not improbable that Italy also, when it completes its imperial designs, will conduct the Pope to its frontiers, thanking him for his provisional services. But if the structure of iniquity, greed, and callousness collapses, or is brought down in some as yet unpredictable world-conflict, it will surely take the Papal Church down with it into the dust. Pius XI with the support of his entire hierarchy, sinned against humanity. They have crucified man upon a cross of gold. Italy, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Bavaria, Poland, and South America will, if they recover freedom,

surely abandon the Church, as Russia deserted the ecclesiastical ally of its tyrants. In the other countries where Catholics are numerous the steady disintegration will accelerate. No Catholic knows, or knows one-hundredth part of, this story of his Holy Church and Holy Fathers. They begin to peep over the barriers which their priests have raised; to resent the unmanly docility that has been won from them by false pretences. They are learning that the Papacy, instead of having guided Europe along the path toward civilization, has even in its best representatives been unfitted to supply that guidance; that it is unique in the history of religion only for the very high proportion of unworthy men who sat on its golden throne, the blood it has shed in defence of its power, the dishonesty of its credentials, and the record of treason to its own ideals.

INDEX

ABÉLARD, PETER, 242, 310, 318, 324, 333
Abyssinia, the Pope and, 494
Acacius, 118
Acton, Lord, 412, 435
Adalbert, Archbishop, 265, 270
Adams, Prof. G. B., 112
Adrian IV, 322–4
Adultery, Roman law on, 30
Afiarta, 160
African Church, the, 39–41, 93–7
Agapetus I, 125
Aistulph, 155
Alaric, 84
Albani, Cardinal, 476, 479
Alberic, Prince, 222–4
Albigensian Massacre, the, 345–51
Alcuin, 165
Alexander II, 267, 270
—— III, 324–7
—— VI, 396, 399, 402–4
—— VII, 450
—— VIII, 458–9
Alexander Severus, 27, 30, 35
Alexandrian Library, the, 82
Alfred, King, 247, 249
Alsace-Lorraine, 485
Altar of Victory, the, 80
Amalasuntha, 124, 125
Ambrose, St., 67, 68, 77, 80
America, the Church in, 485, 497
Ammianus Marcellinus, 60, 61
Anacletus II, 318–19
Anastasius, Bishop, of Naples, 206
——, Cardinal, 185, 199
——, the Emperor, 123
——, II, 118
Anthimus, 128
Antioch, Christians in, 81
Antonelli, Cardinal, 481, 482
Antonina, 127
Arabs, learning of the, 248, 330–2
Arian controversy, the, 53–6
Arnold, the monk, 350
—— of Brescia, 319, 321, 323
Arnulph, 210
Arsenius, Bishop, 192, 199, 200
Art, meaning of medieval, 304–7
Arthur, King, 288
Asylum, Right of, 456
Athanasius, 54, 64
Athens, schools closed at, 85
Attalus, 84
Attila, 104
Atto, Bishop, 243
Augustine, St., 51, 64, 76, 90–4
Aurelian, 42
Austria, the Pope supports annexation of, 495
Avignon, the Popes settle at, 377
——, vice at, 381–2

BABYLONIAN Captivity, the, 376
Bacon, Roger, 369
Barbarossa, Frederic, 323, 326, 327
Baronius, 57, 64, 197, 213
Basil of Cæsarea, 69
Bede, 244
Belisarius, 127
Benedict III, 185, 189
—— V, 228
—— VI, 229
—— VIII, 233
—— IX, 234–7
—— X, 265
—— XI, 376
—— XII, 380
—— XIII, 387, 460
—— XIV, 458, 463–5
—— XV, 490–1
Benno, Bishop, 234, 237
Benzo, Bishop, 269
Berengar, the Emperor, 219
Bernard of Clairvaux, 319, 321
Bertinian Annals, the, 177
Beugnot, Count, 50
Bibbiena, Cardinal, 410
Binns, Dr. L. E., 422
Blennerhassett, Lady, 476
Bogomil, the, 359
Bohemia and the Thirty Years' War, 439, 441
Bolshevism, crusade against, 497
Boniface I, 97

Boniface II, 124
—— III, 139
—— IV, 139
—— VII, 229
—— VIII, 372–7
—— IX, 387–8
—— letters of St., 243
Book of Gommorrah, the, 235, 263
Borgia, Cesare, 404, 405, 407
——, Lucrezia, 405
Borgia family, the, 396
Boso, Duke, 205
Bossuet, marriage of, 456
Boyd, Dr. W., 247
Bracciano, Duke of, 407
Brunichildis, 146
Bruno, Giordano, 440
Buddhism, 3
Burchard, Johann, 399, 403
Byzantine civilization, the, 144

Cadalus, 270
Callistus I, 18, 19, 25–34
—— II, 316
—— III, 396
Calvin, 436
Cambridge Medieval History, the, 154, 223, 240, 255, 260, 264, 279, 286, 289, 326, 336, 374, 377
Cambridge Modern History, the, 415, 421, 441, 445, 465, 470, 476
Campulus, 172–3
Canon Law, 487, 490
Canossa, Henry IV at, 273
Caracalla, 27, 30
Caraffa, Cardinal, 425
Carloman, 159, 161
——, son of Charles, 201
Caroline Books, the, 171
Catacombs, the, 12, 71
Cathari, the, 348
Catharine of Aragon, 412
Cathedrals, the medieval, 306–12
Catholic Action, 496
Catholic Encyclopædia, the, 11, 13, 21, 37, 41, 65, 67, 71, 91, 96, 208, 216, 220, 232, 358, 373, 381, 442, 444, 460, 466
Celestine I, 99
—— II, 321
—— III, 329
—— IV, 361
—— V, 372
Celibacy, law of, 33
——, the struggle to impose, 268–9
Cesena, Massacre of, 384
Chalcedon, Council of, 137–8
Champvallon, Harvay de, 456
Charlemagne, 159, 164–74
Charles of Anjou, 364, 367
Charles the Bald, 180, 200
Charles Martel, 153, 154
Chrestos, 5
Christopher, 158–61
Chrysostom, St. John, 81
Churches in early Rome, 27, 31
Cibó, Franceschetto, 401
Cid, the, 294
City of God, the, 84
Classics, monks and the, 248
Clement of Rome, 10
Clement II, 262
—— IV, 365, 366, 369
—— V, 366
—— VI, 380–2
—— VII, 384, 386
—— VII, 412–13, 423
—— VIII, 439–40
—— IX, 450–1
—— X, 451
—— XI, 459
—— XII, 460
—— XIII, 465
Cluny Reform, the, 223
Coliseum, martyrs of the, 12
Colletta, General, 471, 475
Colonna, the, 371
Commodus, 20, 22
Conciliar Movement, the, 387, 393
Conclave, origin of the, 376–7
Confessional, origin of the, 31–2
Conon, Pope, 142
Conrad, the Emperor, 363, 364, 372
——, Prince, 278
Conradin, 366
Consalvi, Cardinal, 472, 477
Constance, Council of, 389
Constantine, 45, 47–51, 78
——, the Donation of, 167
——, Pope, 143
Constantinople, founding of, 51
——, taken by Crusaders, 345
Constantius, the Emperor, 45, 47
——, II, 53–6
Contarini, Alvise, 444
Cordova, the Mosque at, 307
Corinthians, Roman letter to the, 6, 10, 12
Cornelius, Pope, 38
Coscia, Cardinal, 460
Coulton, Dr. G. G., 433
Counter-Reformation, the, 425–30, 453, 454
Courts of Love, the, 292
Creighton, Bishop, 392, 407
Crescentius, 231
Crispus, 48, 50

Crusades, the, 280, 284, 285, 344–5, 356
Cyprian, 39–41, 93
Czecho-Slovakia, Catholic Action in, 496

Damasus I, 55, 59–73, 81
—— II, 263
Damiani, Peter, 235, 263, 268
Dante, 118, 367
Dark Age, origin of the name, 213, 240
Death-sentence for heretics, 487
Decius, persecution under, 36–8
Decretals, the false, 193–5, 201–2
Delehaye, Father, 11, 17, 47
Democracy at Rome, 321, 323, 325, 328, 339, 360
Desiderius, Bishop, 148
Dictionary of Ethics and Religion, the, 346
Didier, 160, 161, 166
Dill, Sir Samuel, 65
Dio Chrysostom, 13
Diocletian, persecution under, 44–6
Dionysius, Bishop, 37
Divorce in the medieval Church, 190
Dollfuss, Chancellor, 493
Döllinger, Dr., 18
Dominican monks, morals of, 455–6
Dominus ac Redemptor Noster, the Brief, 465–6
Domitian, 9
Donation of Constantine, the, 167
Drews, Prof., 8
Dubois, Cardinal, 456, 460
Duchesne, Mgr., 21, 22, 41, 46, 53, 66, 95, 100, 117, 122
Duel, the, 250

Easter controversy, the, 24
Ebbo, Archbishop, 194
Edict of Toleration, the, 45, 52
Education, the Roman Church and, 115–16, 148, 169–70, 176, 245–8, 329–33
Ehrhard, Prof., 11
Elagabal, 30
Eleanor, Queen, 329
Eleutherius, 199–200
Elizabeth, Queen, 439
Encyclopædia Britannica, Catholics and the, 373
Ennodius, 121
Eugenius, 77
—— II, 176
—— III, 322
IV, 393
Eulalius, 97
Eulogius of Alexandria, 137
Eunuchs, Christian, 21, 53
Eusebius, Bishop, 13, 24, 36, 42, 46
Eustochium, 63

Fabianus, Pope, 37
Farfa monastery, the, 223
Fascism and the Papacy, 492–5, 496
Fausta, murder of, 51
Faustinus, 99
Feast of Fools, the, 312
Febronianism, 467
Felix I, 55
—— III, 118
—— IV, 124
Ferdinand II, 439
Fermo Abbey, 223
Festus, 119, 120
Flodoard, Abbot, 216, 220
Foakes-Jackson, Prof., 5
Ford, Dean, 240
Forged Decretals, the, 193–5, 201–2
Formosus, Pope, 204, 209–11, 218
France, Leo XIII and, 484, 489
Francis I, 436
Frangipani, the, 315, 318
Franks, the, 153
Frederic II, 340–3, 352–6, 361–3
French Revolution, the, 466–71
Friars, early corruption of the, 338
Froissart, 291, 301

Galileo and the Papacy, 440–1, 445–6
Galla Placidia, 96, 97
Gallic Church, the early, 101–2
Gallican Church, the, 458, 467
Gasquet, Cardinal, 433
Gelasius II, 315
Genseric, 100, 105
Gerbert (*see* Sylvester II)
Gibbon, 129, 134
Giotto and the Friars, 306
Giovio, Bishop, 409
Gladiatorial games, the, 114
"Goddess of Reason" story, the, 470
Gordianus, 36
Gothic architecture, the, 309–10
Goths, the, 80, 83, 96
Gratian, 80, 81
Greek Church, quarrels with the, 24, 69, 70, 117–19, 123–5, 127–43
Greek in the early Roman Church, 9, 16
Gregg, F. A. F., 37
Gregorian Calendar, the, 428

Gregorovius, 212, 216, 263, 324, 357, 398
Gregory I, 134–9, 145–9, 151
—— II, 151
—— III, 152
—— IV, 182
—— V, 231
—— VI, 235–7
—— VII, 235, 237, 261, 263, 266, 267–76
—— VIII, 315, 329
—— IX, 355–61
—— X, 366
—— XI, 383
—— XII, 388
—— XIII, 428, 437
—— XV, 440
—— XVI, 479
—— of Tours, 146
Guelf, Prince, 278, 280
Guicciardini, 406, 409
Guido d'Arezzo, 308
—— of Tuscany, 210, 221
Guilds, the, and the Church, 253–4
Guiscard, Robert, 266, 277
Guizot on chivalry, 286–7
Günther, Archbishop, 191, 192, 200
Gustavus Adolphus, 443, 444

Hadrian I, 163–72
—— II, 199
—— III, 209
—— VI, 424
—— VII, 411
—— ,the Emperor, 13
Hale, Archdeacon, 433
Hanno, Archbishop, 265, 270
Haskins, Prof., on the Dark Age, 255–6, 331
Hayward's *History of the Popes*, 444, 448
Helena, the Empress, 47, 51
Héloise, 333
Henry II, of England, 326
—— III, 236, 264
—— IV, 265, 273–5, 277–9
—— V, 281, 315, 316
—— VI, 340, 342
—— VIII, 412, 435
Heraclius, the Emperor, 140
Heresy in the Middle Ages, 345–51, 359–60
Hermingard, 161
Hilary of Arles, 102
Hildebrand (*see* Gregory VII)
Hincmar, Archbishop, 189, 193–5, 201–2
Hitler and the Vatican, 494–5
Hippolytus, 18, 21, 31, 32
Hodgkin, 124, 126, 150
Hohenstaufen Dynasty, the, 352
Honoria, 104
Honorius, the Emperor, 82, 83, 104
—— I, 140
—— III, 318, 354
—— IV, 368
Hormisdas, Pope, 122
Hubert, Abbot, 189
Hübner, Baron, 429
Hugh of Provence, 219, 221–2
Huguenots, the, 436–7
Huns, the, 80, 104
Hus, John, 389
Hyacinthus, 21, 22, 26
Hypatia, 82

Iconoclasm, 152, 171
Ignatius of Loyola, 438
——, the Patriarch, 188
Immaculate Conception, the, 481
Immortale Dei, the Encyclical, 485
Index of Forbidden Books, the, 432
Indulgences, sale of, 423
——, origin of, 344, 374, 388
Infallibility, dogma of, 483
Inge, Dr., 110
Innitzer, Cardinal, 495
Innocent I, 83–5, 93–4
—— II, 318
—— III, 339–51
—— IV, 361–4
—— VI, 383
—— VII, 388
—— VIII, 399–401
—— X, 448–50
—— XI, 458
—— XII, 459
Inquisition, the, 356–9
——, the Spanish, 436
Investitures, quarrel about, 316
Ippolito d'Este, Cardinal, 427
Ireland, learning in medieval, 246
——, the Papacy and, 486
Irenaeus, Bishop, 13, 24
Irene, the Empress, 169, 171
Irmengard, 219–20
Isabella, Queen, 290
Isidorean Decretals, the, 193–5, 201–2

Jaime the Conqueror, 294
Jansenists, the, 460
Japan, the Pope supports, 495
Jerome, 56, 60, 62–5, 66
Jesuits, the, 436, 438, 439, 450, 460, 464, 465–6, 474

Jews, the, at Rome, 4, 430
Joan, legend of Pope, 184
John I, 124
—— II, 125
—— VIII, 203–8
—— X, 215, 218, 219, 220
—— XI, 216, 221, 223
—— XII, 224–8
—— XIII, 228, 230
—— XIV, 230
—— XV, 231
—— XVI, 231
—— XIX, 233
—— XXII, 378–9
—— XXIII, 388, 389
——, King, 343
—— the Faster, 136–7
—— of Salisbury, 149, 287
Joseph II, 467
Josephine, divorce of, 473
Jovinian, 63
Joyce, Father, 92, 96
Jubilee Year, the, 374
Julia Mamaea, 30, 31
Julian, the Emperor, 52, 54, 57
Julius I, 53, 70
—— II, 400, 401, 406–8
—— III, 414, 425
Justice, Papal preaching of, 239, 252, 300
Justinian, 85, 123, 125, 129–32

Kilburn convent, the, 434
Kirsch, Father, 216
Kulturkampf, the, 485

Lactantius, 46
Lambert of Spoleto, 198
—— of Tuscany, 210, 211
Lambertini, Countess, 481
Lamennais, Father, 476
Lanfranc, 275
Lateran Council, the, 406
—— Palace, the, 49, 62
Laurence, the Anti-Pope, 119, 120
Law, medieval, barbarity of, 249–50
Leakage in recent times, 483–5, 488–91
Lecky, 147, 148
Leo I, 87–9, 101, 104
—— III, 169, 172
—— IV, 183–4
—— V, 212
—— VII, 223
—— VIII, 227
—— IX, 263–4
—— X, 408–11
—— XI, 440
Leo XII, 478,
—— XIII, 483–7
Leonine City, the, 183
Leontia, 138
Liberius, Pope, 54–7
Lietzmann, Prof. H., 6
Lightfoot, Bishop, 6
Liutprand, Bishop, 215, 218
——, King, 150, 151, 152
Lombard art, 160, 165, 169
Lombards, the, 136, 143, 150–5
Lothar I, 169, 176, 178
—— II, 189–93
Louis the Pious, 175, 179–80
Love-feasts of the martyrs, 81
Lucas, Prof. H. S., 422
Luchaire, Professor, 292–3
Lucilla, 20
Lucius II, 321
—— III, 328
Lupus, Abbot, 247
Luther, 408, 411, 423

Macrobius, 61, 76
Magna Charta, 343
Manfred, 363, 364, 365
Manichæans, the, 63, 87–9, 348, 359
Mann, Mgr., 149, 156, 198, 234, 326
Marcellinus, Pope, 46
Marcia, 20–22
Marcion, 15, 25
Marcus Aurelius, 16, 20
Markos, the magician, 14
Marozia, 215–18, 220–2
Marriage of priests, 33, 268
Martin I, 141
—— IV, 367
—— V, 390, 392
Martyrs, legends of, 8, 11, 36, 44, 47, 71,
Mary, origin of the cult of, 72
Mass, origin of the, 33–34
Mathilda of Tuscany, 273, 277, 278, 279
Maurice, the Emperor, 135, 138
Maximin, 35
Melchiades, Pope, 48
Meyer, Prof. E., 6
Michael the Drunkard, 187, 188
Milman, Dean, 83, 106, 119, 129, 151, 164, 170, 216, 326
Mithra, cult of, 34
Modernism, 486, 489
Mohammed, 3
Monastic schools, 245–7, 330
Monks as copyists, 248
Monks, the first, 64

Monothelitism, 140, 142
Montalembert, 245, 248
Montanus, 25
Moors, the, 181
Morals, clerical, in England, 433–5
——, in the Age of Chivalry, 290–9
——, in the early Church, 32, 61–5, 113
More, Thomas, canonization of, 492
Morison, J. Cotter, 336
Mullinger, J. B., 247
Music, Catholic, 303
Mussolini and the Papacy, 492–4

NAPLES, massacres at, 471, 475
Napoleon and the Papacy, 471–4
Ne Temere, the Decree, 489
Nero, persecution under, 7–8
Newman, Cardinal, 39
Nicæa, Council of, 69, 97
Nicholas I, 181, 185–96
—— II, 266
—— III, 367
—— IV, 368
—— V, 395
Normans, the, in England, 289
——, the, in Italy, 266, 275, 278, 320, 332

OCTAVIAN, Prince, 224
Olimpia, Donna, 449
Oliva, General, 450
Ordeal, the, 250
Origen, 31, 35
Orsini, Giulia, 403, 404
——, the, 367
Ostrogoths, the, 112, 119, 121, 126, 134
Otto, II, 225–7, 229
—— III, 231–2
Ottonian Renaissance, the, 256
Ozanam, F., 247

PAGANISM, end of, 77–82, 84
Papal States, the, in the nineteenth century, 476–8, 479
Parthenon, the, 308
Paschal I, 176
—— II, 280–2
—— III, 327
——, the Anti-Pope, 142–3
Paschalis, 142–3
Pastor, Dr. L., 356, 384, 385, 392, 398, 408, 413, 414, 424, 425, 426
Paul, St., 5–7
—— I, 157
—— II, 397
—— III, 413–15, 424–5
Paul IV, 425–6
—— V, 439
Pelagius I, 129, 132
—— II, 132, 133
——, the heretic, 93–5
Penitentials, the, 242
Pepin, 154–7
Persecution, the Church policy of, 77–83, 86–9
Persecutions, the, 7, 9, 27, 35, 36, 44
Peter, St., 5, 6, 7, 23
——, forged letter of, 156
Peter's Pence, 175
Petrarch, 381
Philanthropy and the Church, 115–16
Philip IV and the Pope, 375
—— the Arab, 35
Phocas, the Emperor, 138, 146
Photius, 187, 188, 207
Piacenza, Council of, 279
Pinturicchio, 306
Pisa, Council of, 388–9
Pius I, 16
—— II, 394, 397, 404
—— III, 405
—— IV, 426, 428
—— V, 424, 427, 428
—— VI, 467–71
—— VII, 472–4, 478
—— VIII, 479
—— IX, 480–3
—— X, 488–9
—— XI, 491–7
Plebiscites in the Papal States, 482
Plotina, 13
Poggio Bracciolini, 393
Polycrates, Bishop, 24
Pontifical Chronicle, the, 19, 41, 46, 48, 57, 66, 167
Pope, the title, 10
Praxedis, Princess, 278
Priesthood, origin of the, 6, 14, 33
Prisca, 46
Priscillianists, the, 86, 88
Prosper, 95
Prum, Abbot Regino of, 242
Pyrrhus, the Patriarch, 141

RANKE, L. VON, 443, 444, 450, 451–2
Raoul, Count, 253
Ratherius, Bishop, 215, 243
Raymond of Toulouse, 349, 351
Reformation, the 415, 421–5, 435–9
Refutation of All Heresies, the, 18
Relics, origin of the cult of, 72
Ricci, Bishop, 455
Richelieu, Cardinal, 443
Rights of Man, the, 468–9

Ritual, development of, 33–34
Rivera, General de, 493
Robespierre, 469
Rodocanachi, E., 427, 428
Roger I, 320
Roman Church, early growth of the, 38, 42, 49, 74–7
—— Emperors, character of the, 29–30
—— Empire, the medieval, 179
Romanesque architecture, the, 308–9
Rome, fall of, 84, 113
Rothrad, Bishop, 194
Roy, Jules, 195
Ruffo, Cardinal, 471
Rufinus, 61
"Rule of the Whores," the, 197, 212–23
Russia, the Vatican and, 492
Ryan, Mgr., 74

Sabina, 13
Sabinian, Pope, 139, 149
Sachetti, Cardinal, 451, 452
St. Albans, monks of, 434
St. Bartholomew Massacre, the, 436–7, 470
Saracens, the, 181–2, 203–7
Sardica, Synod of, 97, 137
Secret Archives of the Vatican, 356–7
Seppelt, Prof., 444
September Massacre, the, 469
Septimius Severus, 27, 30
Serfdom, medieval, 252–3
Sergius II, 182
—— III, 210, 211, 216, 218
—— IV, 233, 236
——, Duke, 206
——, Papal officer, 158–61
——, the Patriarch, 140
Sermons, Roman neglect of, 75
Shotwell, Prof., 5
Sicilian Vespers, the, 367
Sicily, the Arabs in, 181–2, 214
Sigismund, the Emperor, 389
Silverius, Pope, 127, 130
Silvester I, 48
Simon de Montfort, 350
Simplicius, Pope, 118
Sixtus II, 41
—— IV, 398
—— V, 429–30
Slavery, the Popes and, 101, 114–15, 147
Socialism, the Church and, 485
South America, clerical morals in, 457
Spain, the Pope and, 497
——, clerical morals in, 457
Stephen I, 40
—— III, 155–7
—— IV, 176
—— V, 209
—— VI, 211
—— IX, 264
Stilicho, 83
Stoic Emperors, the, 10, 13, 20
Suetonius, 8
Suger, Abbot, 324
Sulpicius Severus, 69
Supremacy, early claims of, 23, 39, 40, 69, 70, 97–104
Syllabus, the, 482
Sylvester II, 229, 232, 330
Sylvius Ænæas (*see* Pius II)
Symmachus, Pope, 120–2

Tacitus, 8
Talleyrand, marriage of, 472
Tancred, 286
Telemachus, legend of, 114
Templars, suppression of the, 376–7
Temporal Power, growth of the, 147, 151, 157, 163–8
Terror, the Red, 470
——, the White, 471, 475
Tertullian, 25, 27, 31
Teutons, the ancient, 104
Theodora of Rome, 215–18
——, the Empress, 128–31
Theodoric, 119–21, 124, 126, 134
Theodosian Code, the, 65, 78, 79
Theodosius, 76, 82–3
Theodotus, 25
Theophylactus, 217
Theutand, 191
Theutberga, 189–93, 200
Thomas à Becket, 326
Toleration, Catholic doctrine of, 74
Tortures, medieval, 251
Totila, 134
Toto, 157
Trajan, persecution under, 13
Trent, Council of, 424–6
Troslé, Council of, 243
Troubadour literature, the, 295–8
Turberville, Prof. A. S., 358
Turenne, the Countess de, 380
Tuscany, clerical morals in, 455

Unigenitus, the Bull, 460
Universe, the, 490
Universities, beginning of, 337
Urban II, 277–80, 285
—— III, 329

Urban IV, 364
—— V, 383
—— VI, 385–6
—— VIII, 442–5, 448
Ursicinus, 60

VACANDARD, Canon, 346, 347
Valens, 69, 70
Valentinian I, 67, 80
—— II, 77, 81
—— III, 104, 105
Valentinus, 14
Valerian, 41
Vandals, the, 83, 84, 99, 100, 105
Vatican Council, the, 483
—— Field, the, 4
—— Palace, the, 183
Vespasian, 9
Victor I, 22–5
—— II, 234
—— III, 273, 276
—— IV, 325
Victor Emmanuel, 482
Vigilius, Pope, 128, 129–32
Vitalianus, Pope, 142
Voltaire and Benedict XIV, 463

WALDENSIANS, the, 359
Waldrada, 189–93, 200
Walsh, Dr. J. J., 446
War (1914–18), the, and the Pope, 490–1
Wells, Prof. C. L., 246
Westphalia, Peace of, 448
White, A. D., 251
William of Aquitaine, 285
—— of Malmesbury, 236, 289
—— of Nogaret, 375
Woman in the Middle Ages, 215–16, 219, 290–8
Worms, Concordat of, 317
Wycliffe, John, 433

ZACHARY, Pope, 154
Zephyrinus, Pope, 25
Zosimus, Pope, 94–6
Zwingli, 435